



**INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL PROSPERITY 2021-22  
MASTER'S DISSERTATION SPECIAL ISSUE, PART 1**

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Working Paper

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## About the IGP

The IGP's vision is to help build a prosperous, sustainable, global future, underpinned by the principles of fairness and justice, and allied to a realistic, long-term vision of humanity's place in the world. The IGP undertakes pioneering research that seeks to dramatically improve the quality of life for this and future generations. Its strength lies in the way it allies intellectual creativity to effective collaboration and policy development. Of particular importance to the IGP's approach is the way in which it integrates non-academic expertise into its knowledge generation by engaging with decision-makers, business, civil society, and local communities.

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## Abstract

The 'IGP 2021-22 Master's Dissertation Special Issue' is a celebration of the exceptional intellectual achievement of ten distinguished students from the Master of Global Prosperity (MSc GP) and Master of Prosperity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (MSc PIE) programs at the Institute for Global Prosperity (IGP), UCL. This special issue is a testament to their academic excellence, showcasing a diverse array of research that pushes the boundaries of our understanding of prosperity. The ten dissertations, selected for their outstanding quality, innovative approaches, and insightful contributions, will be disseminated across two volumes, each serving as a beacon of inspiration for future students and a resource for further research in the field of global prosperity. However, this special issue represents only a fraction of the innovative and forward-thinking ideas cultivated among the students at the IGP.

The first volume explores the theories, practices and frameworks that contribute to societal prosperity and individual flourishing in diverse contexts.

Nyma Haqqani's dissertation delves into the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in urban greenspaces in the UK. By studying the initiatives of UK Friends Groups – local community groups of volunteers coming under The National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces (NFPGS), Nyma identifies successful practices that enhance ethnic participation, emphasizing the importance of representation, access, diverse activities, youth engagement, and facilitation. The study's recommendations, while acknowledging the need for local customization, provide actionable insights for improving inclusivity in greenspaces.

Nathan Herrebosch's work on 'welfarism' seeks to clarify the concept and its implications for prosperity. By analyzing various definitions and characterizations, Nathan develops a semi-welfarist framework that refines the relationship between well-being and societal thriving. This conceptual advancement contributes to ongoing debates about the role of well-being in achieving social prosperity.

Jane Jackman investigates the impact of public engagement in urban and peri-urban agricultural farms on volunteers' health and well-being. Through mixed methods research, Jane reveals that volunteers report

higher well-being scores and articulate multiple benefits, aligning with previous research on outdoor volunteering and human flourishing. The study underscores the potential of urban farms as therapeutic landscapes that promote health and well-being.

Ismat Juma's research focuses on empowering spaces for women learners through a case study with London-based WONDER Foundation – a charity dedicated to provide education and vocational training for women and girls. By examining the built environment's influence on learning and empowerment, Ismat provides an operational definition of 'Empowering Spaces,' differentiates it from 'Safe Spaces,' and highlights organizational challenges in their development. The thesis offers actionable recommendations for creating spaces that foster women's empowerment through learning.

Faten Kanaan's systematic review on transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems in post-conflict countries investigates the potential of entrepreneurship to rebuild economies and social capital. The study defines the characteristics of transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems, identifies their foundational pillars, and recognizes their contributions to prosperity. Faten's work proposes further research directions to enhance our understanding of entrepreneurship's role in post-conflict recovery.

Together, these dissertations present innovative research that informs policies and practices aimed at fostering inclusive, prosperous, and empowered communities. They highlight the significance of environmental, educational, and economic interventions in shaping a society's trajectory towards sustainability, resilience, and prosperity.

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Thank you all for your commitment to fostering an environment of growth, learning, and innovation.

With sincere thanks, Dr Yuan He, IGP Publications Team Lead and IGP Dissertation Module Co-Lead

## **Publication**

Designed by Vicky Bowman

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# ETHNIC MINORITY INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION IN URBAN GREENSPACE: GOOD PRACTICES OF UK FRIENDS GROUPS

NYMA HAQQANI

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## Abstract

Research shows that ethnic minorities are severely underrepresented in urban greenspace, despite current demographic trends indicating ethnic diversity is growing in urban areas. Existing studies have sought to understand the reasons for low ethnic minority participation in greenspace. However, this dissertation focuses on understanding successful practices that have reportedly improved ethnic participation in greenspace. I do this by examining reported success of UK Friends Groups – local community groups of volunteers coming under The National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces (NFPGS). The NFPGS hopes to make Friends Groups and their greenspaces more representative of the local community by being more ethnically diverse. I employed qualitative mixed methods with a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach to identify and investigate the initiatives and practices of six Friends Groups who self-reported improvement in ethnic participation. The findings of this study revealed five common themes running through different reportedly successful initiatives. These were 1) Representation, 2) Gaining Access, 3) Diverse Activities, 4) Youth, and 5) Facilitation. I discussed these themes in light of existing studies about ethnic minority participation in greenspace, as well as triangulated the themes with literature from wider contexts to establish their validity. Finally, based on the themes uncovered, I formulated recommendations for the NFPGS to disseminate to other Friends Groups to improve their ethnic participation as well, with the caveat that customising for local contexts is crucial to achieving success through the recommendations.

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## List of abbreviations

NFPGS – National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces

FG – Friends Group

EM – Ethnic Minority

UG – Urban Greenspace

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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According to UK national statistics, Ethnic Minority (EM)<sup>1</sup> populations in the UK are reported to be underrepresented in urban greenspace (UG)<sup>2</sup> with EM groups visiting greenspace 60% less than the rest of the adult English population (Evison et al., 2013). Although in recent years legislation and policies have aimed to improve equality of access to UG, such as the UK Government's 'Outdoors for All' strategy<sup>3</sup>, the outcomes of intervention programmes have been insufficient. With ethnic diversity in UK increasing and projected to continue, it is becoming crucial to engage EM communities in greenspace. This is, firstly, because in many urban areas EMs now constitute a majority in the local community and the environment needs active citizens for its protection and maintenance. Secondly, being disconnected from greenspace has adverse effects on social inclusion, health conditions and facilitating integration that increases social cohesion (Evison et al., 2013). Therefore, it is no longer viable environmentally, socially, or economically to continue to neglect the lack of EM participation in greenspace.

My dissertation will seek to examine this issue specifically through the study of the UK Friends Groups (FGs), by qualitatively exploring how UK FGs have achieved improvements in EM participation in their groups and greenspaces<sup>4</sup>. The questions I aim to answer are **1) What are the common themes**<sup>5</sup>

**in initiatives reported by FGs as successful that suggest a basis for establishing good practice?** And **2) What have FGs who reported improvements in ethnic participation in their groups and greenspace done to achieve this?** The identified themes are intended to be the basis for a set of practical recommendations to be implemented by all UK FGs to improve EM participation.

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

As populations become more urban and projected to continue, it has become increasingly important to have greenspaces in urban areas. The benefits of such spaces are multi-fold, including mitigating against urban heat effect (Oliveira et al., 2011) and preserving biodiversity. These spaces also contribute to environmental justice, public health and recreation (Fors et al., 2015). Access to UG is associated with better health, psychological restoration and lower mortality (Snaith, 2015; Van den Berg et al., 2007), which is both socially and economically beneficial.

Greenspaces are a quintessential feature of the urban landscape in the UK. The need for public urban parks in the UK was first conceptualised in the nineteenth century. The 1833 Select Committee on Public Walks was set up to address the provision of open spaces for recreation in increasingly

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1 In March 2021, the UK Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities recommended the discontinuation of the term 'BAME' (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) as it has garnered much criticism recently. Two of its major shortcomings are the exclusion of other minorities not reflected in the acronym and the assumption of homogeneity among the groups it claims to encompass. Therefore, I use the alternative term 'Ethnic Minority'. I acknowledge this term may still have limitations, namely that it still does not disaggregate different ethnicities. However, it is at least more inclusive of the ethnicities excluded from 'BAME'.

2 Urban Greenspace encompasses parks, recreation grounds, nature reserves and woodlands.

3 For more information - [Outdoors for All](#).

4 Throughout this dissertation, the term 'participation' will refer to involvement in both the Friends Groups and the greenspaces.

5 I will only focus on common themes related to reported success (not challenges or pitfalls) and this is what the term shall denote throughout the dissertation.

industrialised cities. The genesis of the idea for public parks emphasised a motive to address concerns for public physical and moral health. This concept was known as 'rational recreation' and centred on the idea the working classes needed parks to draw them away from undesirable pursuits such as drinking and gambling (O'Reilly, 2019).

Member of Parliament Robert Slaney argued (Hansard, 21 February 1833 vol 15 cc1049-59) a lack of recreational spaces led to, not just disease, but also discontent which had the potential to fuel attacks on the government or the rich. He further bolstered his case for public parks by appealing to the Vice President of the Board of Trade with a capitalist argument that parks would increase the consumption of manufactured goods. He theorised that the lower classes would also take pride in displaying their finery, if given the space to do so. He proposed this should be encouraged because it would not only promote 'cleanliness, decency and self-respect' in the lower classes, but would also benefit the wealth of the country by creating consumers who would stimulate the economy and generate profits for capitalists.

This kind of rational recreation in urban parks, therefore, has been criticised by some as an attempt at social engineering, to make working class urban residents emulate the values and behaviours of the urban middle class who self-assumed their own cultural and moral superiority (Wyborn, 1995 as cited in O'Reilly, 2019). Others are not as critical, viewing the establishment of parks for rational recreation less as a concerted effort to impose moral imperialism and more of an indirect way of widening the exposure of the working class to different cultural activities (Conway, 1991 as cited in O'Reilly, 2019). While rational recreation was a defining feature of the roles of parks in the Victorian period, the Edwardian period saw the role of parks change to a place of more active citizenship including political gatherings and sports activities (O'Reilly, 2013). It can be concluded the appearance of UK public urban parks was motivated by a range of concerns for public health, morality, economic improvement and the existing social order.

Another important factor in the genesis of public parks was the demand from the people themselves which is often neglected in a retrospective look at the history of parks. The premise of rational recreation was of social engineering and control in a top-down approach from an active middle-class trying to inculcate their own values and behaviour in a passive working-class. However, some municipal local authorities established a public subscription system for their parks, and this indicates a demand for them existed within the city residents. Working class representatives actively raised money at their workplaces to fund public parks. O'Reilly (2013) is of the opinion this nineteenth century working-class activism proves parks were historically established collaboratively with the community who used the space and their 'evolving ideas about citizenship and social responsibility' (p. 137). She uses Heaton Park as a case study for this and highlights a key characteristic of the shift from a Victorian park to an Edwardian Park was one where citizens took on active roles in the park. The presence of community-based active citizenship roles in UG today, in the form of FGs, is only a natural continuation of that.

## 1.2 NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PARKS AND GREEN SPACES - FRIENDS GROUPS

The National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces (NFPGS), constituted in 2010 to be the voice of Friends of Parks Groups (commonly called Friends Groups), believes in promoting benefits of UG throughout the UK and supports grassroots movement of over 7,000 local FGs. FGs are groups of local community volunteers linking the Local Authority of the park, to the broader community around that park. FGs are essentially community representatives existing to amplify their communities' voices while working with local authorities and local business partners to help manage, maintain, and protect UGs<sup>6</sup>.

While provision and maintenance of UG falls under the jurisdiction of the local authority in the UK,

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<sup>6</sup> <https://natfedparks.org.uk/>



public budget and funding cuts have rendered FGs necessary, as they not only provide voluntary hours of labour but can also apply for funding to maintain their local greenspace. Groups can be constituted with a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer or they may be un-constituted. FGs typically consist of a core group of active members, and a larger supplementary network of volunteers/members/supporters that are not involved in the day-to-day activities of managing the park but can be called upon as the need arises, for organising events, litter-picking etc. To maintain this network, FGs establish links with community groups such as schools, religious groups, local businesses, and other volunteer groups.

The NFPGS aims to ensure FGs are a true representation of the community, embodying inclusivity and diversity. They currently see a need for research to identify network-wide good practice employed by FGs resulting in improving diversity in their groups and local partnerships/links.

For the scope of this research, it was co-decided with my NFPGS partners the specific diversity to focus on would be ethnic diversity. Attention to cultural diversity leads to community empowerment, greater citizenship, gives citizens a sense of their rights to include their own cultures in the broader urban realm (Low et al., 2009, p. 17) and creates place attachment in people for parks can result in pro-environmental behaviour (Ramkissoon et al., 2012).

## 1.3 RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

The purpose of this research is to explore the self-reported success<sup>7</sup> of initiatives that have improved EM participation in some FGs and their greenspaces and to formulate good practice recommendations for other FGs.

The research questions are:

**Primary: What are the common themes in initiatives reported by FGs as successful, that suggest a basis for establishing good practice?**

**Secondary: What have FGs who reported improvements in ethnic participation in their groups and greenspace done to achieve this?**

Identifying common themes running through various successful initiatives, across different kinds of FGs and greenspaces, with varying demographics will help in formulating general recommendations for improving EM participation in other FGs and their respective greenspaces.

The findings will not only help FGs across the UK, but I hope they can inform wider discussion on EM participation in Leisure and Recreation studies. I hope my research may also provide insight for attracting EMs to the general voluntary sector and into other forms of public space.

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<sup>7</sup> Note: throughout this dissertation 'success' will refer to improvement in EM participation and their inclusion in FGs and greenspaces.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

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This section will first look at literature on community involvement in greenspace its positive effects on biocultural diversity and its potential to address social exclusion through social change. Second, it will look at existing research on FGs and what the findings suggest in relation to ethnicity. Lastly, it will critically engage with interdisciplinary research in the fields of landscape architecture, cultural studies, geography and leisure studies that explore the relationship between ethnicity and UG.

### 2.1 REASONS FOR INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATIONS IN UG

National austerity policies have necessitated participation from the people who use UGs, resulting in the popularising of concepts known as user participation, active citizenship, and participatory governance for greenspaces. Studies provide evidentiary support that a community-led approach to UG governance and maintenance leads to an increase in biodiversity (Dennis & James, 2016). Furthermore, incorporating an inclusive approach to UG management has positive benefits on urban biocultural diversity which links biodiversity and cultural diversity (Elands et al., 2015). The term has recently opened up to new evolving perspectives and interpretations relating to the urban context (Elands et al., 2019). Biocultural diversity is considered to account for the different ways urban residents interact with UG, incorporating the different knowledges the cultural diversity of big cities today inevitably introduces (Buizer et al., 2016). It ensures both social and environmental resilience by increasing adaptiveness and enabling transformations.

To harness such benefits, community groups, often embedded within the community and having better access than local authorities to community

minorities, can form more inclusive participatory governance of local greenspaces. Additionally, participation in UG brings communities together, increasing social cohesion (Veen, 2015). Research emphasising environmental injustice and inequity shows people who are most likely to be deprived access to parks in the UK are the most income-deprived and have other social problems (GLA, 2001; Jones et al., 2009). This kind of deprivation results in social exclusion, which Burchardt et al. (1999) define as:

*An individual is socially excluded if (a) he or she is geographically resident in a society but (b) for reasons beyond his or her control he or she cannot participate in the normal activities of citizens in that society and (c) he or she would like to so participate. (p. 229)*

The discourse on social inclusion has been around since the Edwardian period. In 1906 municipal elections in Manchester, Progressive candidate Philip Cohen brought attention to Medlock Street Ward which had wretched living conditions with no open spaces or playgrounds. He stressed the poor residents of the area did not benefit from the large amounts of money spent on Heaton Park due to the barrier of the tram commute cost to the park the poor could not afford ("Municipal Contest," 1906). Heaton Park was therefore not a park for the people but rather only for those who lived near it or could afford to travel to it – which was mostly middle-class residents (O'Reilly, 2013).

Indeed, the earliest parks in UK, such as Sefton Park in Liverpool, abounded in ethnic, class and gender-based inequity of access. Ethnic barriers to accessibility arose based on locations parks were created - putting better parks squarely out of reach for poor citizens belonging to certain ethnicities who could not afford transportation. Class based inaccessibility arose from Sefton Park being monitored with a heavy set of regulations controlling, not only the types of leisure activities

working-class park-goers could indulge in, but also creating problems of qualitative accessibility by ensuring a certain level of discomfort and a sense of not belonging (Marne, 2001). These issues have continued into contemporary debates around UG and even today the struggle to achieve environmental equity and justice persists. The groups who are deprived access to public parks may be slightly different today than in the early 1900s and for different reasons, but the fundamental effort to ensure social inclusion across UGs is unchanged.

Christens and Speer (2015), consider the presence of strong community organisations to be, not only a telling indicator of a community's wellbeing and resilience, but also a promising model to support social change. Research shows community-led partnerships and management can generate new ways of funding and reduce public cost, while also empowering local communities and increasing social returns on investment by raising civic participation (Gilmore, 2017; Sara et al., 2020). Community organisations empower local people to create change for themselves and are even said to be foundational to social change (Stoecker, 2009). Christens and Speer (2015), consider the presence of strong community organisations to be, not only a telling indicator of a community's wellbeing and resilience, but also a promising model to support social change. Research shows community-led partnerships and management can generate new ways of funding and reduce public cost, while also empowering local communities and increasing social returns on investment by raising civic participation (Gilmore, 2017; Sara et al., 2020). Community organisations empower local people to create change for themselves and are even said to be foundational to social change (Stoecker, 2009).

## 2.2 EXISTING LITERATURE ON FRIENDS GROUPS IN THE UK

Current literature on FGs focuses mostly on their partnerships with local authorities, participatory management of parks, place-keeping, and community involvement (Crowe, 2018; Jones, 2002b;

Mathers et al., 2015; Nam & Dempsey, 2019; Speller & Ravenscroft, 2005; Whitten, 2019). FGs in the UK have a significant position in their communities. Jones (2002a) showcases the success of the eight FGs in his study to effectively entice residents back into parks characterised by degradation.

However, pertinent to my research topic, Kim and Roe (2007) who studied FGs from an empowerment perspective, emphasise the issue of inclusiveness in FGs as one needing 'urgent consideration because of the growing cultural mix in many urban areas' (p. 48). They see inclusivity being so vital for FGs, it will shape whether they manage to stay relevant to their local communities in the future. Concern for community representation in FGs is echoed by Whitten (2019), as well as Mathers et al. (2015) who highlighted in their extensive study of seven FGs, that groups were highly effective and skilled in organising events creating local engagement, but observed there was underrepresentation of ethnic minorities. They also observed FG members themselves recognised they were unrepresentative of their local community. Almost all the groups in their study reported they found it difficult to attract people from EM backgrounds.

FGs rely solely on volunteers to conduct their activities and operations. Studies confirm people from EM backgrounds are less likely to volunteer than ethnically white people. This is consistent with findings from studies in the UK (Hylton et al., 2019) where FGs exist, US (Bortree & Waters, 2014) and Canada (Smith, 2012). Intersectionality also comes into play here because individuals from EM backgrounds are more likely to be from low socioeconomic backgrounds and people from low socioeconomic groups are less likely to volunteer (Hylton et al., 2019). Ethnic minorities may also face other barriers such as a lack of skills or resources (Wilson, 2000) or feel disinclined to volunteer for other reasons such as an erosion of their cultural values (Warburton & Winterton, 2010). Making volunteering accessible is essential because of the proven benefits it has on health and wellbeing (Binder & Freytag, 2013; Oman, 2007) and provides a means to address social and health inequalities for those most at risk of social exclusion (Southby &

South, 2016).

## 2.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHNICITY AND URBAN GREENSPACE

OPENSspace Research Group for CABE published strong evidence that ethnicity is a substantial influencing factor on the use of urban parks in the UK (Thompson et al., 2010). There has been much research into why EMs are underrepresented in UG because it has also been established they value access to greenspace (Burgess et al., 1988; Thompson et al., 2010).

Notable academic contribution linking UG with EM populations includes the work of geographer Clare Rishbeth who employs a particularly Lefebvrian understanding of urban space. Her recommendations to embrace diversity and make public space appropriation easy (Ganji & Rishbeth, 2020) echoes Lefebvre's opinion to allow residents 'full and complete usage' of urban space (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 179). Rishbeth highlights distinct ethnic groups perceive, relate to, and make use of UG in different ways. Her research seeks to answer the pertinent question of whether landscape architects and urban space designers should make different design decisions based on the ethnic profile of users. She has also highlighted how the design of UG can foster conviviality among diverse groups which results in social inclusion (Ganji & Rishbeth, 2020; Rishbeth, 2001). Rishbeth's work focuses on establishing ways to increase social inclusion, providing recommendations to landscape architects and policymakers. Rishbeth sees UG as an essential and special place that can help overcome barriers between diverse groups of people.

Landscape architect, Bridget Snaith, also contributes to this discourse by investigating the relationship between the design of urban parks and the preferences of the diverse local communities living around them. Her PhD research sought to answer whether people from EM communities

were underrepresented in UGs because those charged with designing the spaces did so with the assumption their own spatial preferences were universally preferred regardless of cultures and ethnicities. She hypothesises,

*there is a strong likelihood that, symbolically and functionally, the design and management of parks by dominant ethnic groups, will create spaces that reflect their tastes, preferences, practice and underlying ideologies, diminishing the ability and desire of people who are not from the majority culture to claim or practice equal rights to contested space. (Snaith, 2015, p. 18)*

Drawing on the work of social theorists Pierre Bourdieu, Doreen Massey and Henri Lefebvre in her theoretical framework, she underscores the need for 'cultural consciousness' in the design of public spaces in order to make them socially inclusive across different ethnicities.

Snaith also highlights Rishbeth's work as being one of few studies underlining landscape preferences may differ based on cultures and ethnicities, and that park spaces have cultural inscriptions making them less used by certain ethnic groups (Rishbeth, 2001). Both Rishbeth and Snaith agree social inclusion is deemed more likely if physical UGs are planned and designed to attract people of EM backgrounds, based on their cultural and ethnic perceptions and preferences.

However, some other researchers have contested encounters in, or mere usage of, public spaces like UG, are sufficient for the kind of engagement required to resolve conflicts arising from ethnic and cultural clashes. Ash Amin, known for his publications in urban and contemporary cultural geography, particularly criticises the approach of urban planners and designers where 'the public domain is all too easily reduced to improvements to public spaces, with modest achievements in race and ethnic relations' (Amin, 2002, p. 968). Gill Valentine, a geographer and social scientist whose research focus includes diversity and social inclusion, agrees with Amin. She states concerns that geographers have romanticised urban encounters and geographical writings assume

mere contact with 'others' will lead to respect for differences. She suggests a 'need to be careful about mistaking everyday urban etiquette (such as talking to strangers on public transport or in cafés and queues) as respect for difference', and points out that indeed 'spatial proximity can actually breed defensiveness' (Valentine, 2013, p. 6).

Amin is also slightly critical of the sufficiency of large, council-supported, festival style, EM- themed events, like Diwali or Asian Mela, intended to make public space feel EM-inclusive. He believes such events do not cultivate the intercultural dialogue that fosters understanding.

Instead he argues the necessity for spaces of interdependence or micro-publics of 'everyday social contact and encounter' (Amin, 2002, p. 959) including music clubs, sports associations, community gardens or joint volunteer work in FGs

where people from diverse backgrounds can learn new ways of relating with one another.

The concept of micro-publics Amin proposes, was cited by Rishbeth in her later work as evidence for the importance of 'curated sociability' (Rishbeth et al., 2019, p. 127) for marginalised communities. She investigated how refugees and asylum seekers relate to UGs and suggested as methods of engagement and supporting participation, 'curated sociability' approaches, such as low barrier activities like sports that allow for the co-existence of diverse users.

Geographer and leisure scientist, Edwin Gomez developed his own model called the Ethnicity and Public Recreation Participation Model (EPRP) on the basis of previous theoretical models examining recreation participation of EM groups in the US by contributors from the 1970s-90s (Gómez, 2002).

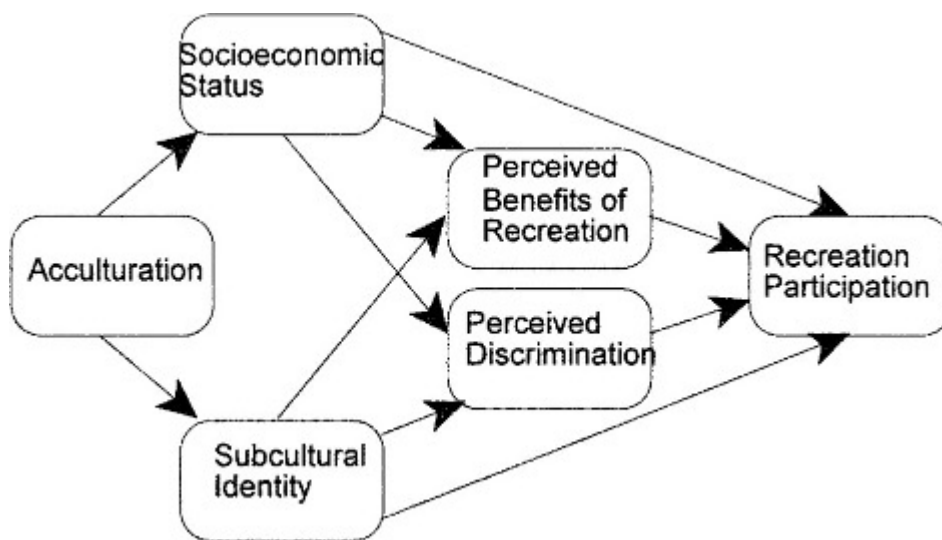


Figure 1 The EPRP Model reprinted from (Gómez, 2002, p. 132)

The main purpose of the model is to help researchers uncover **what** the factors affecting ethnic/racial participation in recreation are and **how** those factors interrelate to affect participation in recreation.

Gomez includes Acculturation in his model and defines it as 'the process whereby diverse groups retain their own cultural norms while adopting aspects of the dominant culture' (Gómez, 2002, p. 133). He conceptualised Acculturation as a precursor to Socioeconomic Status and Subcultural Identity.

He also incorporates West's (1989) discrimination construct and assumes an individual's Perceived Discrimination is related to Socioeconomic Status and Subcultural Identity. He claims if Socioeconomic Status increases and more opportunities become available, an individual perceives less Discrimination which may increase Recreation Participation, and the stronger one identifies with a Subcultural Identity the more they perceive Discrimination which may decrease Recreation Participation.

Gomez, similar to Rishbeth (2004), concludes his study with recommendations to increase EM park visits by providing leisure activities in line with their preferences and communications catering to their language needs (Gómez, 1999). Snaith (2015) is critical of these recommendations, questioning whether they follow logically from his empirical research. She maintains Gomez contradicts himself with his recommendations, given his starting assumption was that EM communities would have different cultural norms regarding park visit frequency, which would be lower than the majority cultural norm. She also questions the correlation Gomez makes between Acculturation and park use, as well as his exclusion of Discrimination findings. Lastly, she asserts there is no evidence park use would increase based on Gomez's inclusiveness recommendations.

While much research has been done on the reasons **why** there may be underrepresentation of EMs in UG, there is a lack of research into what has worked successfully to improve inclusion of EMs in UG. This is the gap my research aims to fulfil. Exploring successful FG initiatives reported to

have improved EM participation will provide insight into what inclusivity measures are effective for EM communities in UK greenspace and what common factors contributed to the success of those different initiatives.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

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I chose to do my dissertation through CRIS<sup>8</sup> at UCL so I could conduct research that would have social impact and incorporate multiple perspectives and knowledge-sharing. I worked closely with three community partners throughout the process. Dave Morris who is chair of the NFPGS and an FG in London, Paul Ely a voluntary advisor at NFPGS and Nadeem Aziz, chair of an FG in Birmingham.

### 3.1 SITUATING THE RESEARCHER

My personal researcher ethos accepts knowledge is situated (Haraway, 1991) and the positionality of the researcher is a pertinent factor in any study. This involves introspection and recognition of uncomfortable truths perhaps raising questions around power, ethics, and representation. However, I believe it is morally beneficial to address these issues transparently and openly admit them while capturing the research process, agreeing with McDowell (1992) who believes ‘we must recognise and take account of our own position...and write this into our research practice’ (p. 409).

I undertook this research topic because as a member of an EM community myself, inclusivity in public space is a subject of particular interest to me. Growing up as a Third Culture Kid (Dillon & Ali, 2019; Pollock et al., 2010) in the expatriate world of the Middle East, I was used to being in a marginalised minority. Attending an international school and living in an expatriate-only gated community, living concurrently with privileges but without basic rights, I had friends and acquaintances from over 50 countries by the time I was an adult. Diversity and cultural differences were something I navigated with ease as a child and other perspectives always something I was genuinely curious to understand. I have often seen myself as a bridge between

cultures, probably similar in many ways to second or third generation immigrants and believe this has formed my ability to look at issues with objectivity and an expanded worldview.

### 3.2 REFLEXIVITY

Understanding my positionality as a researcher was vital for reflexivity which is considered an essential component of qualitative research. Hibbert et al. (2010) define it as a ‘process of exposing or questioning our ways of doing’ (p. 48). I adopted the reflexivity approach of Corlett and Mavin (2018) as a ‘self-monitoring of, and a self-responding to,’ my ‘thoughts, feelings and actions’ (p. 377) through my research process.

During my research, I tried to be cognisant of the fact my background and worldview are different to the UK-specific context under study. As D’silva et al. (2016) asserted ‘people who possess distinct backgrounds from others are likely to have divergent understandings of the world’ (p. 97). I continually gave thought to how my background positioned me as a researcher, particularly in relation to my research participants. During the research process, I felt myself sliding frequently between ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ perspectives (Mullings, 1999). This helped me to question certain aspects of the methodology and make adjustments based on those reflections.

### 3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

I chose to undertake my dissertation with a strong commitment to Participatory Action Research (PAR). The approach is characterised by research emphasising ‘active collaboration through participation between researcher and members of the system, and iterative cycles of action and reflection to address practical concerns’ (Vaughn

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<sup>8</sup> Community Research Initiative for Students (CRIS) at UCL helps partner students with community organisations to produce mutually beneficial research. <https://studentsunionucl.org/volunteering/cris/about-cris>



& Jacquez, 2020, p. 3). Key to a PAR approach is community members and researchers co-designing and co-creating some or all of the research process (Chevalier & Buckles, 2019). I chose PAR specifically because:

- PAR is well-suited to solving real world problems and community-driven social change, which is what I hope my research achieves.
- The Institute for Global Prosperity (IGP) conducts much of its own research in a participatory manner, employing citizen scientists who self-mobilise to effect social change. As such, I have a proven belief in PAR and its benefits to link communities with academic researchers in a powerful and effective way.
- The topic of ethnic diversity is a sensitive one and can invoke feelings of defensiveness or discomfort. PAR makes the process collaborative and co-produced and enables incorporating insight from partners to make the research as comfortable as possible for those involved.

Throughout my research I made sure to constructively share power, collaborate and coproduce with my community partners, recognising they had knowledge and insight I did not, which would inform the research beneficially. Details of how PAR was employed at each stage of the process are given in the methods section.

### 3.4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

My primary question ‘What are the common themes in initiatives reported by FGs as successful, that

suggest a basis for establishing good practice?’ required first understanding the secondary question ‘What have FGs who reported improvements in ethnic participation in their groups and greenspace done to achieve this?’. The secondary question findings will help me to identify themes to help formulate recommendations.

This research used an exploratory mixed methods design (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Martha et al., 2007) with exclusively qualitative data collected and analysed sequentially as shown in Figure 2. The NFPGS previously conducted a networkwide ‘Better Friends Survey’ to gather data regarding group composition, management, activities, and community links. Mixed methods were chosen because the data from this survey needed to be expanded on, and initiatives hinted at, needed to be further explored and developed which was done through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Purposive sampling was employed for both questionnaire and interviews so richer, descriptive insight could be collected from information-rich respondents (Patton, 1990)

Using an inductive approach in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), I carried out thematic analysis on interviews to identify patterns across the dataset following the steps outlined by Braun and Clark (2012). I extracted themes from the patterns and used these to formulate recommendations. Table 1 details the research methods used and the PAR collaboration and co-production with community partners in each phase shown in Figure 2. Ethics was approved by UCL and was observed throughout data collection with all participants’ consent explicitly obtained.

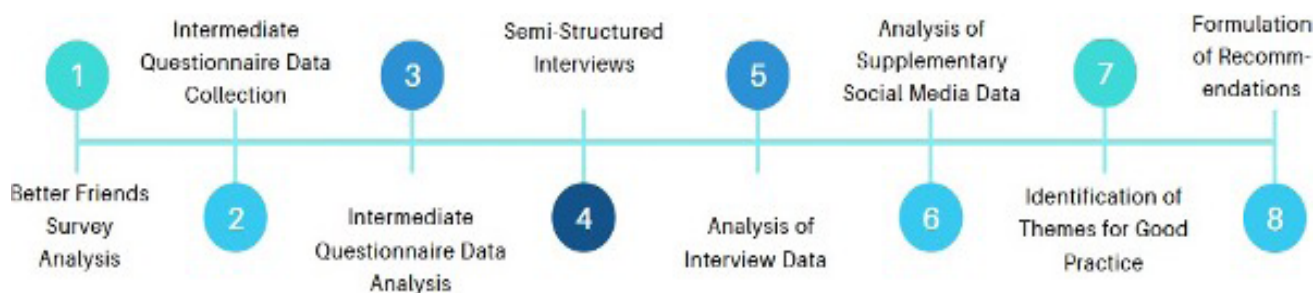


Figure 2 Research Design Diagram



Table 1 Research Phases 1-8 Explained

Research Phase	Description	PAR Incorporation
Phase 1: Better Friends Survey Analysis (Primary Data)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of qualitative data from the NFPGS Better Friends survey.</li> <li>• Dataset comprised 211 FG responses from September 2020 to July 2021.</li> <li>• Analyses qualitative answers from free text questions identifying Gs have achieved self-reported success in ethnic diversity and inclusivity initiatives.</li> <li>• Analysed Likert scale questions about diversity and identified FGs valuing diversity.</li> <li>• Above analysis identified 140 FGs, providing a basis for purposive sampling for questionnaire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best approach and parameters to extract meaningful data from survey results discussed and co-decided with NFPGS community partners.</li> </ul>
Phase 2: Intermediate Questionnaire Data Collection (Primary Data)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employed to ensure best chance of recruiting respondents from FGs most likely to have useful information.</li> <li>• Google Forms Questionnaire requested details about EM diversity initiatives undertaken.</li> <li>• Of total 140 FGs identified in Phase 1:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 118 groups indicating viewing diversity as important sent mass email with questionnaire.</li> <li>- 22 groups indicating self-reported achievements in diversity sent customised emails referring to their answer given in Better Friends survey.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Groups given deadline of one week to respond to questionnaire.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire co-created with NFPGS community partners.</li> <li>• Email drafted by one community partner and finalised with input from myself and other community partner.</li> <li>• Emails sent by community partner to maximise level of response through trusted community member, as opposed to myself as researcher from outside.</li> </ul>

Research Phase	Description	PAR Incorporation
Phase 3: Intermediate Questionnaire Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of 140 emails sent out, 26 responses received.</li> <li>• Questionnaire results analysed with following parameters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Groups indicating an EM diversity improvement initiative undertaken.</li> <li>- Groups indicating a significant initiative in free text question.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Groups reporting an improvement in EM participation after initiative.</li> <li>• Analysis results provided basis for purposive sampling for interviews.</li> <li>• Seven groups identified for interviewing potential, but one declined interview.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NFPGS Community partners consulted on process for recruiting identified groups.</li> </ul>
Phase 4: Semi-structured Interviews (Primary Data)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted to qualitatively explore in-depth, with grounded, inductive approach, FG successful diversity initiative and factors contributing to success.</li> <li>• Emails sent to six groups with Participant Information Sheet (PIS), Consent form and list of broad questions to be covered in interview.</li> <li>• Six interviews carried out on Zoom lasting 40-60 minutes.</li> <li>• Interview transcription was mixture of digital and manual.</li> <li>• Auto-generated text from Zoom transcription feature were initial transcripts.</li> <li>• Manual corrections made by listening back to interviews and ensuring speech meticulously captured.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision to send list of broad questions to participants was due to strong suggestion by NFPGS community partners to -make interviewees feel more comfortable and less anxious - help interviewees come prepared with most useful information.</li> <li>• Worked with NFPGS community partners to include FG member of South Asian background in research process.</li> <li>• Four of us together co-produced interview questions</li> </ul>
Phase 5: Analysis of Interview Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic analysis of interviews in Nvivo</li> <li>• Descriptive and values coding done using grounded theory and inductive approach.</li> <li>• Two rounds of coding done to refine data and make groupings across interviews to identify implied or explicitly stated 'successful' practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community partners kept informed.</li> </ul>

<b>Research Phase</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>PAR Incorporation</b>
Phase 6: Supplementary Analysis of Social Media Data (Secondary Data)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content analysis on FG Facebook groups via observation.</li> <li>• Analysed last six months of posts for representation of EM communities.</li> <li>• Post counted as being EM-representative based on visual indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EM persons in photos</li> <li>- EM cultural elements in posts promoting events (like Eid)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community partners kept informed.</li> </ul>
Phase 7: Identification of themes for good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final codes analysed for commonalities and overlaps.</li> <li>• Codes grouped into themes.</li> <li>• Themes encapsulated practices and initiatives for which FGs self-reported success in EM participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed initial findings and themes with all three community partners.</li> <li>• EM background community partner offered insight confirming themes uncovered made sense from perspective of EM communities.</li> <li>• All community partners provided insight, resulting in finalised themes.</li> </ul>
Phase 8: Formulating Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Themes interpreted through and validated by triangulating with wider literature on EM participation in other sectors.</li> <li>• Recommendations for EM participation produced for FGs based on five themes and related practices by FGs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborated with all community partners on recommendations.</li> <li>• Ensured output of research was accessible and easy for non-academic communities to engage with and use.</li> </ul>

### 3.5 ENRICHMENT THROUGH PAR APPROACH

Given the sensitivity of the topic and the potential for participant discomfort or defensiveness around discussing or revealing action or inaction to address ethnic underrepresentation, it was vital to build a research environment of trust and comfort. Using PAR, my community partners were invaluable in providing insight on how best to phrase questions in the questionnaire, craft an email in the most encouraging and transparent language, as well as helping me to understand the exact reasons why this topic was sensitive in the context of FGs, which helped me greatly in interacting with participants during interviews..

In Phase 4, my choice to send a list of questions to participants prior to the interview was influenced by community partner suggestion for reasons outlined in Table 1. This illustrated how ‘academic-community partnerships... work together to make choices that... best meet the needs of both the research and those involved in the research’ (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020, p. 5).

Additionally in phase 4, the interview questions were initially a process of iterative collaboration between myself and my two NFPGS community partners. However, because of my conscious effort to question my positionality throughout the

research, I realised I was addressing the question of ethnic participation in FGs, but the research itself lacked the voice of a person from the group I was hoping the research would affect.

My two community partners were both of White-British ethnic backgrounds and I, despite being from an EM background and perhaps an insider in some ways, was an international student in the UK, and as a simultaneous outsider, did not have detailed understanding of the lived experience of an EM background citizen/resident. If my intended research outcome was to increase inclusion of EMs in FGs and their greenspaces and for it to have ‘the potential to contribute to longer-term processes of societal change’ (Mahony & Stephansen, 2017, p. 43), then it was imperative the research process included the voice of an FG member from an EM background; a member of the group we were hoping for the research to effect social change in AND who was involved in an FG (the desired outcome of the good practice we were concerned with) as illustrated in Figure 3.

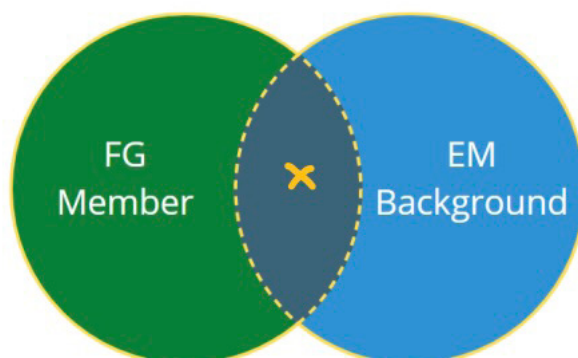


Figure 3 Venn Diagram illustration of the voice that needed to be included in the research.

Incorporating reflexivity enhanced my research by ensuring the inclusion of relevant voices with lived experience of the topic being studied. This informed the research process beneficially and upheld the commitment to PAR, characterised by the ‘co-construction of research through partnerships between researchers and people affected by and/or responsible for action on the issues under study’ (Jagosh et al., 2012, p. 311).

Borrowing Vaughn and Jacquez’s (2020) ‘Participation Choice Points in the Research Process’ diagram<sup>9</sup>, I visually summarise the levels of community partner participation employed in Phases 1-8 in Figure 4<sup>10</sup>. Vaughn and Jacquez’s description of levels is mentioned in Figure 5, where ‘Inform’ is the lowest level of participation and ‘Empower’ is the highest.

### 3.6 LIMITATIONS

One of the main limitations of this research is its basis on FG self-reported success and not empirical evidence. A primary reason for this is because no baseline data exists against which to measure success. It is not FG practice currently to keep statistics, nor is it likely they will do so in future due to a lack of resources and volunteers. Perhaps also due to the voluntary nature of FGs, response to the questionnaire was low. Possibly, there were other FGs who had successful initiatives but did not respond to the questionnaire. Using purposive sampling based on the Better Friends survey results lent itself to logic, but it was based on the answer to a Likert scale question. These can be subjective and so the criterion may have excluded FGs having valuable information to share. Lastly, PAR can take longer to get things done as achieving consensus takes time with multiple stakeholders producing the research.

9 Note: Unlike in Vaughn and Jacquez’ literature, I did not use the level of participation to guide the selection of research tools.

10 For Phase 4, I have chosen to indicate a participation level between collaborate and empower, because the participation of the FG member of EM background greatly shaped the research and empowered the voice of the community the research hopes to impact.

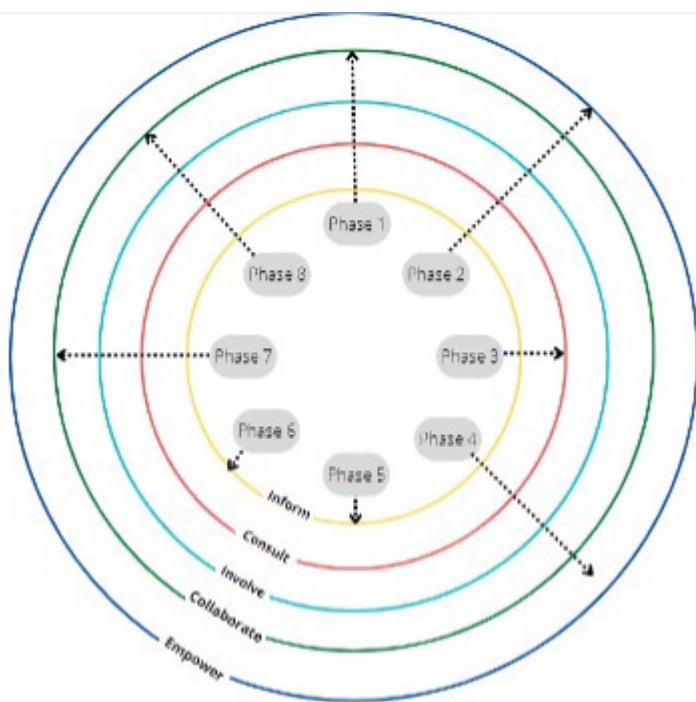


Figure 4 Community partner participation levels in each phase - Adapted from (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020, p. 6)



Figure 5 Definitions of community partner participation levels in research - Reprinted in adapted form from (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020, p. 6)

## 4. FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the analysis results<sup>11</sup>, first addressing what FGs who reported improvements in ethnic diversity in their membership and greenspace did to achieve that (secondary question), leading to understanding what common themes there were in the different FG initiatives that might suggest basis for good practice (primary research question).

### 4.1 CONTEXT OF

### PARTICIPATING FGs

Table 2 (*Table 2 Context of participating FGs' greenspaces and communities*<sup>12</sup>) sets the context of the FGs and their greenspaces, describing the general locations and ward demographics to give an idea of the EM population in the local area. The table shows local areas have varying percentages of EMs which is good for generalising the findings.

<sup>11</sup> Because of the sensitivity of the topic, participants were promised total anonymity to facilitate open conversations. Hence, the participants and FGs have been assigned pseudonyms and numbers, respectively. All names mentioned in subsequent quotes have been changed for confidentiality.

<sup>12</sup> Ward level demographics obtained from City Population. (n.d.). <https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/> which cites its source as UK Office for National Statistics. I was unable to obtain ward-level disaggregation directly from the government website.

Group No.	Participant Pseudonym	Greenspace Location	Ward Demographics
FG1	Walter	Birmingham	63% Asian, 24% White, 8% Black, 3% Mixed/Multiple, 1% Arab, 1% Other
FG2	Mark	Liverpool	95% White, 2% Asian, 1% Black, 2% Mixed/Multiple, 0% Arab, 0% Other
FG3	Gabriella	Bradford	54% Asian, 43% White, 1% Black, 1% Mixed/Multiple, 1% Other, 0% Arab
FG4	Catherine	London	52% White, 24% Black, 12% Asian, 6% Mixed/Multiple, 5% Other
FG5	Brad	Gloucester	93% White, 3% Black, 2% Asian, 2% Mixed/Multiple, 0% Arab, 0% Other
FG6	Heather	Manchester	80% White, 11% Asian, 5% Black, 4% Mixed/Multiple, 1% Other, 0% Arab

## 4.2 FG EM PARTICIPATION LEVELS

The initiatives FGs undertook to achieve reported improvement in EM participation, which were indicated in the questionnaire answers and elaborated on in the interviews are summarised in Table 3. The table also indicates what EM participation looked like for each group because of their initiative(s), ranging from having an EM core group member in the FG to EM usage of the park. These levels of participation (which I established based on insight from my community partners) are visualised in Figure 6 from the most passive to the most active. For example, from these two sources we see FG1 has high levels of EM participation across passive and active types of participation. The FG has two EM core group members, active EM supporters, active partnerships with EM groups and high EM park usage. Other FGs will have varying levels of participation.

### Table 3 references:

**EM Core Group Member**<sup>13</sup>

**EM Active Supporters of FG**<sup>14</sup>

**EM Active Links**<sup>15</sup>

**EM Usage**<sup>16</sup>

## 4.3 THEMES

In the semi-structured interviews, I asked participants to elaborate on the initiative(s) indicated in their questionnaire answers and to reflect on what factors contributed to the success of those initiatives. Participants' self-reported success was most often based on visual indicators (like seeing increased EM visitors in the park) and sometimes based on feedback from the EM community. The participants made explicit statements about factors they believed contributed to success of their specified initiative, as well as implicit statements indicating success due to other practices which I meticulously coded in the analysis.

The analysis process involved carefully disaggregating the elements of a single successful initiative into its separate factors which were assigned codes. I further analysed these codes for commonalities and grouped them together into themes. From this thematic analysis, I extracted five themes, 1) Representation, 2) Gaining access, 3) Diverse Activities, 4) Youth and 5) Facilitation (overview shown in Figure 7), which will be discussed in detail and illustrated with quotes from the interviews.<sup>17</sup>

The themes are closely intertwined and often one initiative intricately weaved multiple themes together. It is important to note themes themselves do not indicate low-participation or high-participation scenarios. For example, the interviews revealed it was equally possible to have visible core group EM representation with low overall EM participation, as it was to have no core group EM representation but high overall EM participation.

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13 Refers to EM background members in the core group (as officer, committee member, regular organiser, or trustee) representing the highest level of involvement with an FG.

14 Refers to EM background members who are not part of the core group but still very active in the greenspace's activities and events, supporting the FG with volunteering.

15 Refers to the partnerships and contacts FGs have with local ethnic groups that get involved in the greenspace and with FGs.

16 Refers to EM visitors to the park and has the lowest level of engagement with FGs.

17 All quotes have been kept as close to the original speech and only edited for anonymity or for brevity to highlight a specific point.

Table 3 Summary of FG ethnic diversity improvement initiatives and EM participation as reported by FGs

Group	Main EM Participation Improvement Initiative(s)	EM Core Group Member	EM Active Supporters of FG	EM Active Links	EM Usage
FG1	Partnering with local EM organisations and groups and requesting a park-keeper more representative of the local Asian community.	2	Yes	Yes	High
FG2	Partnering with a University and Local school with large ethnic mix and changing meeting venue to a more inclusive location.	0	No	Yes	Medium
FG3	Partnering with local EM community groups, co-opting a female Asian representative in the core group.	1	No	Yes	Medium
FG4	Supported the development of widely varying independent user groups for a range of activities.	0	Yes	Yes	High
FG5	Partnering with local groups that have ethnic mix.	0	Yes	Yes	Medium
FG6	Setting up meetings with local EM women's group to understand what they needed from the green-space and FG. Being representative on social media.	1	Yes	Yes	High



Figure 6 EM Participation levels from passive to active

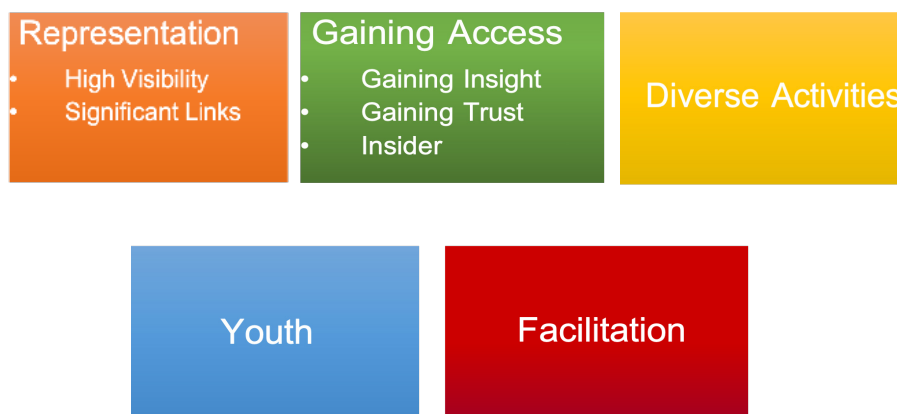


Figure 7 The five running themes identified in successful EM participation improvement initiatives.



## 4.3.1 REPRESENTATION

### Subtheme 1: High Visibility

Walter of FG1 related how he realised one day the cohesion between the park-keeper (a form of authority) and the local EM community was not working very well. He decided upon the park-keeper's retirement, to request the next one be 'more representative of the community'.

Walter says this initiative alone has, seen a complete change in the local communities and

***the people living in and around and using the park. What a difference that made really because 90% of the park users are Asian... [Having a park-keeper from the Asian community], it has [been a key turning point] - it has opened up avenues of introduction.***

**High Visibility** subtheme refers to EM representation manifested either as an EM person in visible leadership roles like park-keepers, FG core group members and EM user group leaders, or then more passive but still highly visible representation like events celebrating EM cultures and customs such as 'Diwali' celebrations or 'Mela in the park, which obviously attracts the Asian community' (Walter, FG1). Five FGs reported such highly visible forms of representation contributed to success and helped EMs think about the possibility of participating – as Heather from FG6 reflected, 'I think, just having some [EM] presence on the board has helped people to go, okay it's not just for white, old, people'.

### Subtheme 2: Significant Links

A dominant view amongst all FGs was that key partnerships with local EM groups were critical to improving EM participation, evident in the quote from Gabriella of FG3 who highlighted the role of **Significant Links** saying,

***It was a concerted effort between us. The H\*\*\*\*\* Centre - the people they cater for, are...all South Asian ...then R\*\*\*\*\* is definitely the Asian Women and girls, but... that's mental health [group]... people coming into the initiative from***

***different directions...So it's not just us, if we were working alone things wouldn't happen.***

A few examples of significant links identified by FGs were neighbourhood groups, health centres working with EMs, or schools with mostly EM students. Partnering with such key groups reportedly improved EM participation either in simple usage of the park or more active citizenship such as 'the Asian Community...started a park watch with us and patrolled the park with us at night' (Walter, FG1).

FG6 indicated in the questionnaire one of their successful initiatives was representing diversity on social media. Since all FGs had Facebook groups, I analysed the last six months of posts for representation of EM communities using observation as a methodology like Snaith (2015), employed in her user counts to assess EM representation in the Olympic Park. This method assumes ethnicity identities based on physical markers or attributes – a limitation acknowledged by Snaith too.

This observation covered both subthemes because posts were counted if EMs were visible and EM-representative posts often promoted a significant partnership with an EM user group. The results showed a wide disparity amongst FGs' numbers of EM-representative posts, ranging from just 1 post in the last six months for one FG to 36 posts in the same period for another and FG6 having the second-highest representative posts at 27. Furthermore, Gabriella (FG3) claimed they had feedback the local EM community did not use social media.

## 4.3.2 GAINING ACCESS

Gabriella of FG3 recounted in her interview how her FG felt they had tried everything they could to reach the local EM community. They had printed out flyers and put them in mailboxes, tried speaking to local councillors for assistance, but the local EM community remained elusive and out of reach. It was only when they recruited an EM female representative to be in the core group, a breakthrough was made.

***Farzana who joined us...she's somebody who's active in the Asian community. And she has the trust***

*of, especially the women...We knew... our efforts needed to be channelled through somebody who the community trusted... Her input meant we got feedback as to what the real situation was. She was the one who made us aware of the fact a lot of the families don't come out without their men. The menfolk are all - a large portion of them - are doing night, evening shifts ... So, if we wanted to engage the local community, we needed to time our events slightly differently.....And she was able to recruit two Bangladeshi ladies for our Apple Day last year to make fresh chutney with apples... we then got feedback from Farzana from these two ladies and the comment was – “we didn't think that sort of thing was for us” but they've really enjoyed themselves.*

From Gabriella's anecdote we see **Gaining Access** consists of three subthemes which were reflected in four of the FGs' initiatives. FGs revealed Gaining Insight into EM communities helped FGs make adjustments that encouraged EM communities to get involved with the greenspace. Due to cultural differences, sometimes FGs did not know what EMs required from a greenspace. Gaining this insight was often achieved through Gaining Trust of the community either by having informal chats ('and we had this women's meeting in the park ...a very lovely chat' – Heather, FG6), or in cases where access was extremely difficult, by employing trusted word-of-mouth Insider Communication ('the word would go out via the new park-keeper, through the newspaper shop down the corner, sort of social gatherings... particularly where men were concerned' – Walter, FG1) which also overcame language barriers by using native language communication.

The **Gaining Access** subthemes interlink together because the process of Gaining Insight by holding informal focus groups as one FG did, itself fostered trust as barriers were broken down. Using Insider Communication involved using insiders which resulted in FGs Gaining Trust. And using Insider Communication, like FG3 did with their Asian trustee, brought feedback resulting in the FG Gaining Insight.

### 4.3.3 DIVERSE ACTIVITIES

All FGs interviewed emphasised the significant role an array of organised activities had in EM participation. This theme encompasses FG practice to have different kinds of activities going on in the greenspace organised by either FGs themselves or local community groups.

Catherine (FG4), painted a colourful picture of the rich tapestry of diverse activities going on in their greenspace, providing opportunities for intermingling between different user groups.

*We hold a people's coffee morning... there's a walk group that comes past and an older people's health walk - a lot of them come in and that's very ethnically mixed, it's like you know, some of them sitting around playing dominoes and another play chess and it's just nice talking shop and it's very mixed...[People] living around our park... feel able to come in, because there is so much going on. There's an activity most people can say 'Oh, I want to do that', so I think that's the way it works in our park...It's so full of people.*

Sometimes the activities were intercultural, allowing interactions between different ethnicities, like FG5's community allotment gardens where, 'the ...allotments group ...get more and more people becoming interested in... growing their own food...and there's a black BAME Community there all the time. We help them with it, and everybody helps, everybody else' (Brad, FG5), showcasing a space where people of all backgrounds work together on a common goal.

Other times the activities described were organised by EM-specific community groups, such as the 'Ghanaian football team that come in and play on the field every Sunday [who] just turned up and did it' (Catherine, FG4). These groups at times only made use of the parks which is at the lower end of the participation spectrum (Section 4.2, Figure 6) but other times their engagement with FGs placed them higher up on the participation spectrum.

## 4.3.4 YOUTH

All but one FG strongly emphasised the success they saw by bringing younger people into the greenspace, whether through partnerships with schools and universities, or through FG-organised activities. It was reported to be a significant avenue to improving EM participation because according to Gabriella from FG6, '[When] the children do things, the parents turn up'.

Mark (FG2) specifically credited partnerships with schools and universities as being a key reason their greenspace had significant improvement in ethnic diversity observing it was 'not just in respect of specific events for the school, but in terms of those children, bringing their friends and family to the site. So, it... has a knock-on effect of increasing the diversity of site users'.

Heather (FG6) stated involving youth in park activities inevitably means the parents come out to watch or at the very least pick and drop them. She thinks this helps support a broader learning in EMs of how they can participate in greenspace saying,

*Once those kids come to the park... and their parents are coming to the park to drop off and pick them up and they'll see all the stuff on noticeboards about what we're doing. It all just helps to embed the learning this is not just for 'other' people - it's for everybody.*

Walter (FG1) also illuminated the fact 'in Asian communities not all children go to schools, traditionally' and special groups partner with FGs to 'bring those home-schooled children out into the environment'.

## 4.3.5 FACILITATION

Five FGs recognised encouraging EM communities to engage with them and use the greenspace, sometimes required facilitation in various ways. For example, Gabriella (FG3) recounts how they facilitated the involvement of two Asian ladies at their event by ensuring 'it was all organised and we paid their expenses, because they needed to have

a taxi because otherwise there was nobody there to [bring them]'.

The facilitation was not always monetary, as Catherine (FG4) narrates how they 'worked together and supported [an EM user group] ...with fundraising and with their lease and other things', to obtain one of the park buildings for their activities. In this way, FGs improved EM user group participation by facilitating them with their own skills and expertise.

Similarly, Mark (FG2) advocated for facilitating EM participation by pushing his FG to start holding meetings in a more inclusive space, recognising meeting in a pub could be a barrier to people from other backgrounds. He asserted FGs needed to be 'open to people who have different religions and different EM mixes who wouldn't have set foot in that sort of establishment'. Likewise, Heather (FG6) narrated how her FG attempted to make local EMs feel included and more comfortable in the park's new tea-room by inviting feedback on the menu saying, 'they had a look at the menu, and suggested some things they definitely wouldn't eat and things that were missing off they would normally and so we adapted the menu slightly'.

## 4.4 SUMMARY

The themes I extracted from my analysis are interrelated and often a successful initiative drew on several themes. For example, FG3's recruitment of an EM representative into the core group, which I used to explain the Gaining Access theme, also falls under the Representation theme. I have attempted to illustrate each theme with specific examples from interviews but due to how intricately related they are, it may rightfully appear one initiative falls under multiple themes. The themes I extracted from my analysis are interrelated and often a successful initiative drew on several themes. For example, FG3's recruitment of an EM representative into the core group, which I used to explain the Gaining Access theme, also falls under the Representation theme. I have attempted to illustrate each theme with specific examples from interviews but due to how intricately related they are, it may rightfully appear one initiative falls under multiple themes.

## 5. DISCUSSION

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In my literature review, I have discussed at length existing literature on the reasons why there may be EM underrepresentation in UG. In this chapter, I will link the themes from my findings to the literature reviewed, discussing where they confirm or contradict each other.

Secondly, one of the things found to be lacking was baseline data to empirically measure progress or success of initiatives and the analysis relied on FG self-reports of success.

Therefore, I will triangulate the themes I extracted from my data with findings on EM participation in other fields, like Healthcare, Minority studies, Education, Psychiatry and Sociology to verify their validity.

### 5.1 REPRESENTATION (SUBTHEMES - HIGH VISIBILITY, SIGNIFICANT LINKS)

A dominant view amongst FGs stressed the importance of highly visible representation, as well as more passive low-profile representation. When FGs had a highly visible EM member in a leadership position, they reported very active or greatly improved EM participation. Similarly, when FGs had links with EM groups who use the greenspace or groups having influence on EMs (such as local doctors' surgeries) they reported improved EM participation.

Gomez's model discussed in Section 2.3, postulated Sub-cultural Identity and Perceived Discrimination constructs intervene to affect EM Recreation Participation (Gómez, 2002). My Representation theme links closely to this concept because a person experiences 'representation' only when they are aware of their own 'sub-cultural identity' in order to compare it to the other person. Seeing someone they perceive to be like them at an aspired role, in a leadership position, or even taking part in an activity perhaps one felt was for 'other people',

makes it likely EMs perceive they would face less discrimination too, if they did the same as the person representing his/her perceived identity. Identifying Representation as a success factor in improving EM participation confirms Gomez's position stating when people are aware of their sub-cultural identity AND perceive low discrimination their participation improves.

As mentioned in the review section, Amin (2002) is somewhat critical of highly visible large, organised events like Eid or Diwali celebrations believing they are insufficient in fostering intercultural understanding, although he acknowledges they are 'important signals of shifting urban public culture' (p.968). However, my research aims to identify success in improving EM participation, not intercultural understanding, and FGs reported large, culturally representative events are very successful even in cases, like FG3, where the EM community has been very difficult to access.

Broader contexts also confirm Representation improves EM participation. In the field of Health research, Williams et al. (2010) asserted employing minority staff, faculty and consultants was key to successful recruitment of minority participants in research. Although, the context is entirely different we can draw a parallel to my research because FGs also, in a sense, 'recruit' volunteers for their support and participation in greenspace. Williams et al. also advocate for 'advertising strategies' with EM representation in photos to create positive impressions. However, contrary to this recommendation, FGs reported inconsistent success with EM-representative social media, which my supplementary Facebook observation analysis confirmed. The three FGs with the highest EM representation on Facebook have varying levels of EM participation. Therefore, it was doubtful whether online representation could be generalised for good practice.

Research in Psychiatry shows EMs may feel more at ease approaching and discussing problems with someone they perceive to be of a similar background (Jackson et al., 2004; Malgady & Costantino, 1998), such as in the case of FG1, with their EM background

park-keeper. Additionally, Representation links closely with the socio-psychological concept of role models (a person others look to imitate) which greatly impacts mental barriers and minority participation (Lockwood, 2006; Rivera et al., 2007). FG1, with the highest number of EM core group members and highly visible EM park-keeper, appeared to have the most self-mobilisation and active citizenship from the local EM community. Leadership Studies research provides further support Representation in leadership roles has a causal effect on the group being represented to have an increase in leadership roles overall, establishing with empirical evidence, the importance of representative role models for underrepresented groups (Arvate et al., 2018). When EM communities see EM core group members in FGs they may start to think, as Heather (FG6) said, it is not just for 'others'.

Similarly, in Political Science studies, Banducci et al. (2004) invoke empowerment theory to suggest representation has positive effects on EMs' trust in government and participation. Since FGs are a form of participatory community governance, they would benefit greatly from EM representation, as it would attract more EM participation. Bobo and Gilliam (1990) also postulate Representation is a precursor to EM empowerment, which in turn is associated with greater participation in their empirical evidence.

## **5.2 GAINING ACCESS (SUBTHEMES - GAINING INSIGHT (GI), GAINING TRUST (GT), INSIDER COMMUNICATION (IC))**

According to the majority of FGs, Gaining Insight of what local EM communities required from them and their greenspace was imperative to improving EM participation. Without insight, EM cultures were to FGs, as one participant put it, 'a bit of a mystery to us!'. In agreement with Snaith (2015), this finding confirms her assertion spatial managers must be willing to challenge their own pre-conceived notions to manage spaces with input from the local community to understand their needs.

However, Snaith challenged Gomez's (1999) and Rishbeth's (2004) conclusions for increasing EM participation by catering to EM's leisure preferences and language needs, arguing there was no evidence presented park usage would increase because of these recommendations. FG reports suggest such initiatives as recommended by Gomez and Rishbeth do, in fact, increase EM participation in greenspace. According to FGs who catered to EM preferences and addressed language needs through Gaining Insight and Insider Communication, EM participation improved. As Walter (FG1) related, the EM background park-keeper employed heavy insider communication to help the FG gain community trust. This led to mutual understanding and respect for each other's cultures and they 'were able to open doors, or windows perhaps, you could see through' which improved EM participation.

Broader contexts also confirm the importance of Gaining Access to EM participation. Health Studies, for example, supports this theme with its recommendations to improve minority participation by forming connections with trusted members of the community and insider perspectives using word-of-mouth (GT/IC) (Ahmed et al., 2022; Mohammadi et al., 2008; Williams et al., 2010). Minority participants reported the most-influential method to recruit them was referrals by other participants or trusted community members (Sankaré et al., 2015) which are particularly effective in collective cultures (McLean & Campbell, 2003). In Immigrant and Minority Health studies, Ibrahim & Sidani (2014) highlight studies successfully recruiting minorities by enlisting referent members of the community (GT/IC), collaborating with community leaders, and involving them in the recruitment process (GT/GI/IC), as well as effectively using word-of-mouth (GT/IC).

## **5.3 DIVERSE ACTIVITIES**

All six FGs held the position a rich variety of activities, organised both independently by local community groups as well as by FGs, succeeded in attracting EM participation. These diverse

activities can be thought of as the ‘micro-publics’ discussed in the literature review, which Amin (2002) describes as purposefully organised and allowing for people from varying backgrounds to come together for a common goal in an environment of intercultural conviviality. Due to the presence of a common goal, micro-publics enable moments of solidarity. The kinds of activities Amin considers to be micro-publics are ‘communal gardens, community centres, neighbourhood-watch schemes, child-care facilities, youth projects and regeneration of derelict spaces’ (p. 970), all of which were mentioned as thriving activities by at least one FG.

Sociologists Wise & Velayutham (2009), suggest leisure and sport activities are good possibilities for such micro-publics. These are logically abundant in greenspace and evident in the plethora of sports teams, walking groups, youth clubs, biking clubs, craft groups and theatre groups making use of the parks managed by the FGs in this study. Robinson (2020) adds weight to this theme in her study of everyday multiculturalism in a knitting group held in another form of public space (a public library). She found from such ordinary activities (as opposed to local authority sponsored interventions or celebrations of multiculturalism), emerged a kind of community-feeling and trust that fostered understanding of differences and consequently the social inclusion of EMs.

While my results agree with the existing literature on how micro-publics can facilitate participation of EMs, through my interviews it was also identified there were many ethnicity-specific community groups organising activities as well. Hence, the concept of micro-publics as conceptualised by Amin did not always hold true in the FGs studied. The many diverse activities did offer plenty of opportunities for intercultural encounters which could be harnessed to create the kind of participation that engages more with FGs (like different ethnicities working on the same allotment garden), but they also included groups that were sometimes labelled by an ethnicity itself (‘Kurdish-women’s walking group’ and ‘Ghanaian football team’).

While this could be seen as exclusionary to others and not embodying the kind of interculturalism Amin’s micro-publics envisions, it likely helps marginalised groups to participate by doing so in the safety of their own numbers – especially if the community is very tentatively emerging to join the wider community, like in the case of FG3. As the levels of participation increase it is reasonably believable these ethnicity-specific groups do not remain cloistered within their own groups but will gradually start to mingle and engage with other groups, as described by Catherine (FG4) of various user groups joining a larger group at the community centre for coffee and biscuits, after their respective activities. The case for encouraging ethnicity-specific groups is also evidenced in the number of such groups recently forming to venture into rural countryside and national parks (Hill, 2022; Kampfner, 2021) All FGs reported providing space for such diverse activities, whether intercultural micro-publics or ethnicity-specific groups, attracted EMs to participate in greenspaces.

## 5.4 YOUTH

Five of the six FGs claimed the involvement of youth through various initiatives had a positive effect on EM participation in their greenspaces and two explicitly mentioned children’s activities influenced parental involvement.

In Leisure Studies research, Loukaitou-Sideris & Mukhija (2019) promote environmental justice for EM groups in peri-urban parks and highlight their participants’ suggestions to forge partnerships with schools, universities and other youth clubs like Scouts, recognising their importance in improving ethnic diversity. While they do not present evidence these recommendations would work, the success FGs report from their own initiatives of partnering with local schools and youth groups gives their recommendations credibility.

There is a paucity of studies specifically examining the link between youth inclusion in UG and its effects on ethnic participation. However, broader studies lend weight to FGs’ claims youth-



involvement initiatives improved EM participation. In Education studies, for example, Sanders (2009) makes the assertion school, family and community partnerships promote collaboration between students, their families, the communities, and schools.

After-school, extracurricular activities, like sports, held in greenspaces through school partnerships with community groups like FGs, can offer a point-of-entry for parents to get involved. This general ease with which parents can get involved in youth activities held at greenspaces is possibly one reason why FG youth-themed initiatives have seen reported success. Even by simply coming to watch a child's activity EM parental participation in the greenspace increases. Also, such activities offer parents the opportunity to build relationships with each other around the commonality of their children taking part in the same activities, resulting in 'a greater sense of a collective community' (Warren et al., 2009, p. 2231).

Attending after-school activities can be a comfortable experience for EM parents (Birman et al., 2007) as it allows for a passive observer role, as well as offering opportunities to build relationships with other parents, both EM and non-EM. Such relationships may reasonably offer introduction into other activities (such as an EM mother befriending other mothers and being invited to join a morning walk group). Partnerships with communities, schools and parents 'focus on the leadership development of parents' which Warren et al. (2009, p 2210) cite as a core element of community-based organisation collaborations with schools. In extracurricular activities, this could manifest as leadership in taking on lead roles to organise activities or volunteering as assistant coaches for junior sports teams. Interactive participation like this is postulated to be a prerequisite to the kind of active citizenship (Jansen et al., 2006) that may culminate in FGs having EM active core group members.

## 5.5 FACILITATION

This theme encapsulates successful elements of FG initiatives characterised by extra measures taken to support EM participation. Gomez (2002) hypothesises in his model Socioeconomic Status affects EM participation; a low socioeconomic status hinders participation. FG3 appears to confirm his postulation with reports of improved EM participation at their park event by providing funded transportation. Without this compensation, FG3 claimed the EM persons would not have been able to participate in the event.

There is evidence to support facilitation for marginalised communities in wider contexts as well. Healthcare research claims providing compensation and incentives like covering travel expenses or childcare, improves EM participation in studies (Ibrahim & Sidani, 2014). Offering free classes and compensation that offset practical barriers (Williams et al., 2010) like FG3 did, signals to EM members FGs appreciate their participation and efforts in the community space.

However, my research also uncovered facilitation need not always be in the form of financial compensation. Sometimes the facilitation was in the form of FGs sharing skills with various EM groups or helping build capacity by supporting them through legal processes to get approvals from local councils like FG4 did. Such knowledge-sharing aligned with what my EM community partner highlighted as a necessity during the research process. He strongly voiced those who have specialist knowledge needed to be a successful FG, should share that knowledge with EMs to build their capabilities. He stressed one reason EM people hesitate to come forward is a lack of formal education or skills and being unconfident in what they could offer to FGs. The two FGs who claimed to work on building EM groups' capabilities also reported more self-mobilised EM participation than most of the other FGs

Other times FGs facilitated EM participation by recognising certain barriers to participation existed in current FG practices and adapting, like changing meeting locations from a pub to a more inclusive

venue. My EM community partner also pointed out FGs facilitating inclusion like this where EMs could be their authentic selves, without compromising their cultures or beliefs, enables minorities to feel comfortable sharing ideas and stepping up for leadership roles which would help slide them higher up the participation spectrum (Section 4.2, Figure 6).



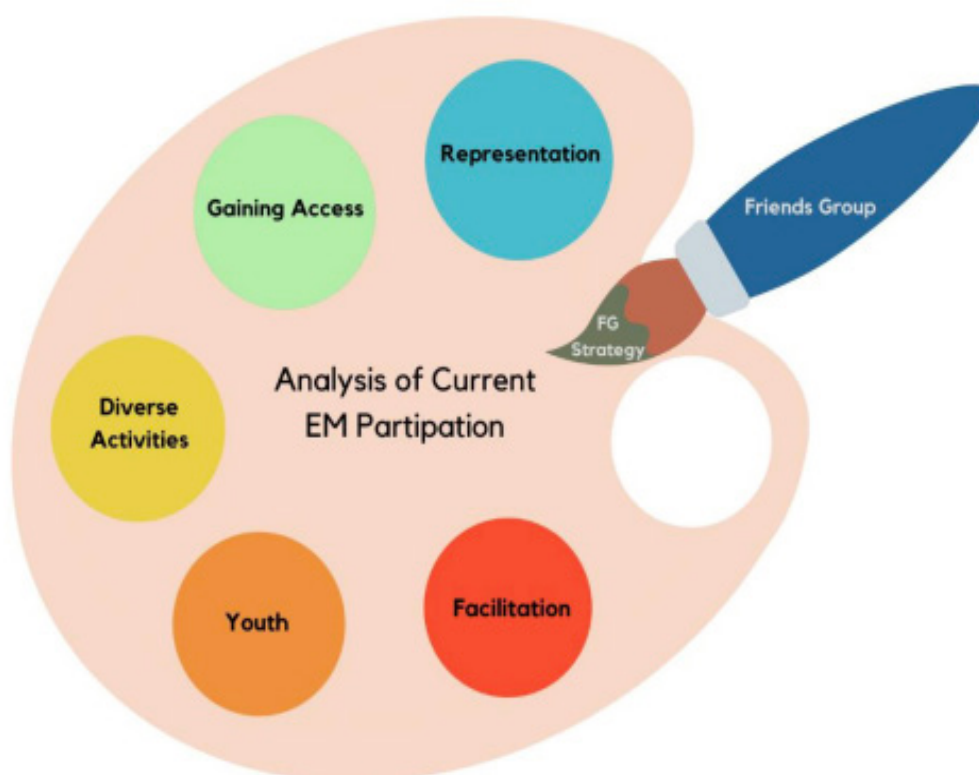
## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this research was to provide the NFPGS with practical recommendations FGs could use to improve EM participation in their groups and greenspaces. This section will present recommendations based on the findings of qualitative research investigating the successes of six FGs who self-reported improvements in EM participation, in an approachable and community-usable format.

I present a Recommendations Palette in Figure 8 to visually illustrate FGs must get creative to formulate their EM participation improvement strategies. Most of the FGs interviewed first informally analysed the current EM participation situation. This helped them to customise their initiatives to the local context. In line with Amin (2002), who sees success resulting from local context and local energies, I suggest

a foundational recommendation to first analyse current EM participation levels to understand the local context (denoted by the palette itself).

Based on that insight, FGs should mix recommendations corresponding to different themes found in Table 4. For example, an FG with a local context of an extremely hard-to-reach EM community, not even visiting the greenspace, could create a 'mix' relying heavily on the recommendations given under Gaining Access and Facilitation first, before adding Youth and Diverse Activities recommendations. In contrast, an FG with an EM community making active use of the greenspace but no EM core group member, should make use of Representation recommendations and see if there are some Facilitation recommendations that can be used in conjunction.



*Figure 8 Recommendations Palette to improve EM participation in FGs and greenspace*

Table 4 Recommendations of the Recommendation Palette

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Support from Research</b>	
Recommendation 1	Analysis of Current EM Participation by Completing the NFPGS EM Participation Level Checklist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All studied FGs reported recognising where EM participation was lacking (usage, supporter, core group etc.)</li> <li>Forms basis for customising initiatives to improve participation based on local context.</li> </ul>	
Recommendation 2	Recruit EM persons into core group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All FGs interviewed revealed representation was associated with improvement in EM participation.</li> <li>Both highly visible leadership roles and passive representation of EM groups in greenspaces considered important.</li> </ul>	<b>Representation</b>
Recommendation 3	Establish partnerships with key EM community groups to use greenspace for their activities		
Recommendation 4	Lobby local authority for more diverse on-site park services staff.		
Recommendation 5	Enlist support of trusted insiders from EM communities.	Four FGs interviewed indicated gaining access to EM communities was achieved successfully through insight, trust and/or insider communication	<b>Gaining Access</b>
Recommendation 6	Make heavy use of trusted word-of-mouth communication and personal referrals.		
Recommendation 7	Hold informal focus groups with EM communities to understand what they require out of the greenspace and FG management.		

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Support from Research</b>	
Recommendation 8	Organise a diverse array of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All FGs interviewed reported greenspaces with range of varied activities was associated with good EM participation.</li> </ul>	<b>D i v e r s e Activities</b>
Recommendation 9	Encourage EM visitors to set up their own activity groups as well.		
Recommendation 10	Encourage user group collaborations.		
Recommendation 11	Establish links and partnerships with local schools and other youth groups (scouts, various youth sports clubs) to collaborate and organise after-school activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Five FGs interviewed, highlighted involving youth in parks improved EM participation notably.</li> <li>Two FGs explicitly mentioned parents influenced by children's involvement.</li> <li>Education literature suggests such situations opportunities for parental leadership development.</li> </ul>	<b>Youth</b>
Recommendation 12	Engage with EM parents accompanying children to organised activities and develop inter-parental community by organising activities for parents.		
Recommendation 12	Facilitate EM participation to overcome different kinds of barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Five FGs reported facilitating EM involvement had positive effects.</li> <li>Monetary compensation where financial barriers to participation existed were reported successful.</li> <li>Identifying non-inclusive current practices and changing them improved participation.</li> <li>Facilitating active participation through sharing knowledge and skills-training to empower EMs was successful.</li> </ul>	<b>Facilitation</b>

In attempting to establish a template for good practice it is crucial to emphasise flexibility and customisation based on local EM participation levels. The Recommendation Palette is an attempt at doing this, giving direction but leaving enough space for FGs to assess themselves and create their own strategy from the recommendations.

# 7. CONCLUSION

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## 7.1 KEY HIGHLIGHTS

My dissertation sought to understand good practices that improve EM participation in UG, specifically through the lens of UK FGs. I aimed to produce recommendations for the NFPGS' network of FGs to replicate similar success. My research benefited from multiple perspectives as I used a PAR approach throughout the research process, collaborating closely with my community partners and co-producing elements of the research together. Including an EM community voice in the methodology, embedded the desired outcome of the research (EM inclusion and participation) within the research process itself.

The two research questions addressed what self-reportedly successful FGs did to achieve the improvements in EM participation and what the common themes in the different initiatives were that could offer basis for good practice recommendations.

I uncovered five running themes from FGs reports of successful initiatives. First, FGs reported using elements of highly visible as well as more passive Representation in their successful initiatives. I show how this finding is supported by Gomez's model and argue there is validity to FGs reports by triangulating it with wider literature on EM participation from fields such as healthcare and psychiatry amongst others.

Second, FGs reported Gaining Access to EM communities was key in improving their participation. Half the FGs described doing this by enlisting the help of trusted insiders who helped FGs gain insight through feedback. Trusted word-of-mouth insider communication was cited by four FGs to improve EM participation. I engage with the academic debate outlined in my literature review, by offering FG reports of success as evidence for the validity of recommendations given by Rishbeth

and Gomez and challenged by Snaith. Additionally, I discuss how Minority and Health Studies literature provides further reason to believe there is weight to FGs' claims success is associated with Gaining Access.

Third, I found all FGs reported having a wide array of Diverse Activities and user groups in the greenspace to have a positive effect on EM participation. I detail how these diverse activities are akin to Amin's 'micro-publics', which in the FG and greenspace context helps foster community-feeling and participation. However, I also draw attention to FG reports ethnicity-specific group activities and park usage improved EM participation. I argue that while this does not follow Amin's prescription for interculturalism, it allows for EM participation from communities perhaps not ready for intercultural exchanges.

Fourth, I found five FGs highlighted involving Youth in greenspace improved EM participation. I triangulated these findings by examining studies in Education asserting community organisations (like FGs) and school partnerships have positive effects on parental development and relationships. I postulate FGs see improved EM participation because of EM parent development through involvement in youth activities in their greenspace

Fifth, four FGs reported Facilitation of EM participation through monetary compensation, skills-building or removing barriers to participation helped EMs participate. I make the case this is in line with Gomez's model and also further validated by evidence from the broader context of EM participation in Healthcare research.

Finally, I used the five common themes I extracted to formulate a set of recommendations for other FGs to improve their EM participation. I visualised this as a Recommendations Palette to illustrate FGs must mix and customise their own strategy

using the different recommendations suggested. This is essential because due to the high variability of local contexts it would be unwise to have a standardised approach. The palette analogy lends itself flexibly to FG creativity and encourages them to assess what their local context is first and then apply the most appropriate recommendations.

## 7.2 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

One of the main limitations of this study was the aggregation of EMs as one homogenous group. It is important to acknowledge there are many different cultures within the EM group. Additionally, degrees of acculturation and assimilation affecting participation vary across first generation, second generation and third generation EMs, which was also not captured in my research. Secondly, the in-depth qualitative interviews were done on six FGs only and the limited sample size could raise questions about the generalisability of findings.

Based on these limitations, I suggest future research in this area disaggregate EMs by sub- culture and/or degree of acculturation by first, second, third generation status. Doing so may also result in formulating more targeted inclusion practices that prove more effective than recommendations targeting a broad EM group. I also recommend increasing the sample size to establish better generalizability for good practice.

## 7.3 RESEARCH VALUE

The research output of my study has been a set of usable recommendations for FGs that can be customised for local contexts. This will prove valuable in helping FGs across the UK to increase EM participation in their groups and greenspaces – the intended research outcome. The NFPGS also

believes the recommendations could potentially act as a template for other diversity efforts, like disability or age. Beyond the specific case of FGs, they could be used in other public settings such as libraries or museums to improve EM participation and extrapolated to other aspects of diversity there as well. Understanding what has worked in improving EM participation in FGs and their greenspaces can illuminate what might improve EM participation in the broader voluntary sector as well.

More broadly, with the UK projected to become more ethnically diverse in the future and EMs beginning to constitute majorities in certain urban areas, it is vital space managers understand how to make UGs socially inclusive and their practices conducive to active participation from diverse ethnic groups. As national policies of austerity continue, more volunteers will be required in greenspace to ensure their protection and preservation. This is not only crucial for environmental sustainability but also because UGs have proven their momentous role in supporting physical wellbeing and mental health of urban populations by providing much-needed refuges, evidenced during the pandemic.

Finally, legislation alone cannot end social injustice and exclusion. Ensuring the urban realm is a place where diversity thrives, requires those managing its spaces, whoever they are, to commit to practical measures that foster social inclusion. Enabling active participation from all members of the urban community is a matter of social justice and even relates to global agendas such as the UN SDGs, particularly Goal 11 for sustainable cities and communities. My research has highlighted the meaningful role community organisations can play in effectively driving localised bottom-up efforts towards achieving real and positive social change.

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# UNDERSTANDING WELFARISM: CONCEPTUAL REFINEMENTS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR PROSPERITY

NATHAN HERREBOSCH

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## Abstract

This dissertation aims to gain a better understanding of the concept ‘welfarism’ and to explore what this increased conceptual clarity can contribute to the theory and practice of prosperity. In its most general form, welfarism refers to the idea that individual well-being is the only thing that is ultimately and intrinsically valuable. However, definitions and characterisations of ‘welfarism’ vary widely between authors and disciplines. This dissertation sheds light on the conceptual muddle surrounding welfarism by analysing the various usages in the literature. It also zooms in on one of the potential benefits of this analysis: that it can help articulate more refined positions on the relation between well-being and prosperity. More specifically, steps are taken to develop a semi-welfarist example framework for thinking about prosperity. The wider significance of this research lies primarily in its contributions to pressing debates on what it means for a society to thrive, and in particular the relationship between prosperity and well-being. It supplies new conceptual tools that help refine such discussions and introduces innovative arguments about the value of well-being to the domain of social prosperity. Moreover, the framework developed here presents an intriguing and thought-provoking way of thinking about prosperity that has both intuitive and practical appeal.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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The idea that GDP (Gross Domestic Product) might not be an adequate measure of how well a society is doing, nor a sufficient end-goal for policy, has been around for a while. Already in 1968, Robert Kennedy said: “it measures everything [...], except that which makes life worthwhile” (quoted in Stiglitz, Fitoussi and Durand 2019, 2). Various critiques of GDP as the foundation of prosperity have been formulated by some of the most renowned scholars of our time (see e.g. Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi 2010; Stiglitz, Fitoussi and Durand 2019). Consequently, the call for alternative views has grown louder and louder. This call has been answered by numerous institutions, academics and think-tanks that have created ‘alternative measures for progress’ (Corlet Walker and Jackson 2019). Some examples of this are the Legatum Prosperity Index, OECD Better Life Index, Happy Planet Index, Social Progress Index and the UNDP Human Development Index. In many of these recent GDP-alternatives, well-being takes a prominent place. Some even go so far as to make prosperity depend solely on some form of well-being. For example, the Legatum Prosperity Index is aimed at covering “economic and social wellbeing” (Legatum Institute 2021), and the Happy Planet Index declares to be a measure of sustainable well-being (WEAll 2021). We can wonder whether well-being can indeed carry this weight it is burdened with. Is well-being alone a sufficient basis for prosperity? Is it really that valuable?

A useful concept for thinking about such questions is ‘welfarism’. In its broadest sense, welfarism refers to the idea that only individual well-being is ultimately and intrinsically valuable. However, definitions and characterisations of ‘welfarism’ vary widely between authors and disciplines. The main aim of this dissertation is then to obtain a better understanding of the concept ‘welfarism’ and to explore what this increased conceptual clarity can contribute to the theory and practice of prosperity. More concretely, there are two (double) research questions: first, what are the main differences between various understandings of welfarism in the literature and how can illuminating these differences be useful?

And second, what can a semi-welfarist framework for prosperity look like, and what are the potential merits of such a framework?

This dissertation consists of two parts, which follow the two research questions. In the first part, I explore the different meanings of ‘welfarism’ in the literature and I analyse the lines along which they differ. I also discuss the confusions they cause and show how this analysis allows us to formulate a new, semi-welfarist position. The second part of the dissertation then further explores that position and takes steps in developing it into a framework for thinking about prosperity. I first examine what a semi-welfarist framework for prosperity could look like more concretely, and then what its merits would be. I discuss both the benefits of the framework and how potential criticisms can be addressed.

In this dissertation, I adopt a pragmatist research paradigm. The main feature of pragmatism is that it is committed to solving real-world problems and willing to employ any methodology that can best help address these problems. Researchers are free to design the research methodology that best suits their needs (Creswell and Creswell 2018, 34-35; Kaushik and Walsh 2019). At the ontological level, pragmatism denies that there is one single reality that can be ‘discovered’ or accurately described by the researcher. Rather, in this paradigm, reality is constantly negotiated and the subject of continuous interpretation by individuals (Creswell & Creswell 2018, 34-35; Maarouf 2019, 6-8). Hence, at the epistemological level, a pragmatist view must recognise “that any knowledge ‘produced’ through research is relative and not absolute” (Feilzer 2010, 14). For this dissertation, the main significance of all that is that I do not claim any ‘absolute truth’ here. For example, when I describe what I mean by ‘well-being’, I am not claiming that this use of the concept is the most ‘true’, but rather that this interpretation is the most useful within the context of this dissertation. Similarly, when I defend semi-welfarism, I am not trying to convince the reader of the transcendental truth of that principle, but rather

that it can be a useful way to look at things.

While this dissertation is mainly conceptual and philosophical, the ultimate goal still lies in real-world applications and impact. Thus, the research presented here also points to how abstract conceptual enquiry can help make a difference in the real world. Through my research and this dissertation, I hope to make a valuable contribution to vital questions around prosperity and welfare. This will then hopefully help us make better decisions about what to prioritise in our societies and how to organise them.

## 2. WELFARISM AND ITS MEANINGS

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### 2.1 SOME CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

The purpose of this first part of the dissertation is to analyse welfarism and its different meanings. But before I come to that, I must briefly discuss a few other concepts to ensure that our premises are clear and to avoid confusion.

#### Well-being

The word ‘well-being’ is often used to refer specifically to physical well-being or health. In this dissertation, however, I use it in its broader, philosophical sense. Well-being is then about what is good for *individuals*<sup>1</sup>, or what benefits them. Hence, the well-being level of an individual corresponds with how well their life is going for them<sup>2</sup>. And claiming that something increases your well-being is the same as saying that it is good for you (Haybron 2008, 29; Crisp 2021). Of course, one can still wonder what exactly it means for something to be good for someone, or what kinds of things benefit individuals. There is much interesting debate about such questions. However, I will not go into this now. Instead, I simply use well-being in the very broad sense of what is good for someone.

#### Welfare

In the literature on welfarism and related subjects, ‘welfare’ also refers to what is good for individuals. L.W. Sumner, for example, describes welfare as “the condition of faring or doing well” (2003, 1). Hence, for the purpose of this dissertation, ‘welfare’ can be considered a synonym for well-being.

#### Utility

A third term that is sometimes used to refer to what is good for individuals is ‘utility’. However, other usages of ‘utility’ are more common. In utilitarian theory, it denotes the tendency of an object to promote good around it (Broome 1991, 2). In economics, utility is very often used to refer to the degree to which a person’s preferences are satisfied (7). Moreover, some authors discussed in this dissertation (e.g. Ng 1990, 175) explicitly contrast utility with welfare and use the two words to refer to different concepts. Therefore, I prefer to not use the word ‘utility’ here to avoid confusion. Nevertheless, ‘utility’ may appear in this dissertation in direct quotations. When that is the case, one can safely assume that the same is meant as with wellbeing.

#### Prosperity

A central concern of this dissertation is the evaluation of societies or communities. To refer to such evaluations, I use the term ‘social prosperity’ or simply ‘prosperity’. For example, the prosperity of London then amounts to how well London is doing as a city. I will also talk about the domain of social prosperity. With this, I refer to the broad set of questions surrounding prosperity, such as: What makes a society good? How can we define collective ‘success’? And what counts as ‘progress’ for a country?

An alternative term for ‘prosperity’ would have been ‘social welfare’, which is also often used to indicate how well a society is doing. However, ‘prosperity’ and ‘social welfare’ differ in genealogy, usage, and context of application. ‘Social welfare’ is primarily

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1 I prefer to talk about the well-being of ‘individuals’ rather than ‘people’ or ‘persons’. The reason is that, depending on how you define well-being, not only people can have well-being but other living beings as well. ‘Individuals’ here thus refers to every individual creature that is a well-being recipient in the relevant sense. It is hence not necessarily constrained to humans.

2 To make this dissertation as gender-neutral as possible, I often use they/them/their pronouns in their singular, gender-neutral sense.



used in the literature on social welfare functions and hence closely related to technical welfarism, which I renounce (cf. *infra*). In contrast, prosperity thinking emphasises people's lived experiences and living well together with others and the planet (see e.g. Moore 2015; Moore and Woodcraft 2019; Moore and Mintchev 2021). Since the current project has more affinity with the latter than with the former, I opted for the term 'prosperity'<sup>3</sup>. However, readers familiar with prosperity thinking should note that I use the word prosperity in a narrower sense than some other authors do. Here it simply refers to how well a society is doing.

## 2.2 WELFARISM

This section can be seen as an 'extending review' of the literature on welfarism. It not only describes how 'welfarism' is used but also goes beyond this to create higher-order constructs and insights (Xiao and Watson 2019, 100). To collect the literature, I systematically searched Google Scholar, Web of Science, Scopus and PhilPapers. The process followed the recommendations of Xiao and Watson (2019, 102-8), first selecting by title, then abstract, and then full text. Searching went on until reaching theoretical saturation (Bryman 2012, 421).

### Welfarism in the literature

In its broadest sense, welfarism roughly means that only individual well-being is ultimately and intrinsically valuable. The first to write about welfarism in this way was Amartya Sen (1977) in his essay "On Weights and Measures". He later refined his discussion of welfarism in "Utilitarianism and Welfarism" (Sen 1979). Sen coined the term welfarism in the context of discussions of social welfare – and did so to criticise what he meant by it. He describes welfarism as "treating social welfare to be functions only of the individual welfare vectors (without admitting any non-welfare description of social states)" (1977, 1568). 'Welfarism' is still often used in this sense within the social sciences. Over the years, however, it has also been picked up in other spheres and the word now has several different

meanings. This has led to quite some confusion and often complicates debates about welfarism. In this section, I try to resolve some of the confusion by analysing the various meanings of 'welfarism' and how they differ.

To begin this analysis, Table 1 provides an overview of definitions of 'welfarism' in the literature. This table is not meant to be exhaustive, but it does cover the most influential authors on welfarism and gives a good overview of how the term 'welfarism' is most often used.

### Table 1 Definitions of welfarism in the literature.

Baujard 2012, 1 "Welfarism is the view according to which utility is the only relevant information to derive social welfare."

Blackorby, Bossert, and Donaldson 2002, 1 "Welfarist principles for social evaluation rank social alternatives using information about individual well-being (welfare, utility) alone, ignoring non-welfare information."

Bramble 2020, 1 "Welfarism is the view according to which the relative value of possible worlds is fully determined by how individuals are faring— or, in other words, by the facts about well-being that obtain—in these worlds."

Dorsey 2016, 1 "Welfarism—at least in the sense I'm interested in discussing— refers to the suggestion that this evaluative concept—welfare—is the only thing that makes a normative difference;"

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Dorsey 2016, 4 "Welfarism: a theory  $\theta$  of domain  $d$  is welfarist if and only if the devaluation of evaluative targets (acts, in the case of morality; social institutions, in the case of political justice, and so forth) according to  $\theta$  are determined by facts about welfare."

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<sup>3</sup> While I prefer to use 'prosperity' over 'social welfare', the latter might still appear in this dissertation, e.g. in quotations. When it does, it refers to evaluations of how well a particular society is performing.

Holtug 2003, 151 “According to outcome welfarism, roughly, the value of an outcome is fundamentally a matter of the individual welfare it contains.”

Keller 2009, 82-83 “Welfarism says that morality is all about individual welfare. It says that facts about the best interests of individuals are, in some sense, the building blocks of morality.”

Moore and Crisp 1996, 598 “Welfarists claim that morality is fundamentally a matter of the wellbeing of individuals.”

Mukerji 2016, 93 “On all interpretations, welfarism is not the view that the well-being of individuals is morally relevant. It is, rather, the considerably stronger idea that it is the only thing that matters.”

Ng 1990, 171 “Roughly speaking, general utilitarianism (or welfarism) is the belief that what makes anything (an act, a change, a policy measure, a rule) morally right or wrong, good or bad, ultimately depends only on its effects on individual utilities.”

Rechenauer 2003, 3 “The welfarist claim amounts to this: all relevant information necessary to judge the relative goodness of the alternatives is contained in the individual utility functions.”

Rivera-López 2007, 74 “According to welfarism, welfare is the only intrinsic value.”

Sen 1979, 468 “The judgment of the relative goodness of alternative states of affairs must be based exclusively on, and taken as an increasing function of, the respective collections of individual utilities in these states.”

Smuts 2018, 101 “In its most general form, welfarism holds that the ultimate ground for all moral value is welfare.”

Sumner 2003, 184 “Welfarism is the view that nothing but welfare matters, basically or ultimately, for ethics; it is therefore a normative theory about the foundations of morality.”

Weymark 1998, 251 “Welfarism is the principle that the relative desirability of social alternatives should,

in all circumstances, be determined by a single social ordering of the feasible vectors of utility levels.”

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While all these definitions of ‘welfarism’ share a common denominator – namely the broad idea that well-being (or welfare) is the only intrinsic value – there are also many differences between them. I will now analyse some of these differences. This can help guide future discussion and allows for more detailed positioning and argumentation. It is not my intention here to give a comprehensive overview of all the dividing lines along which ideas about ‘welfarism’ may differ. Rather, I focus on the two distinctions that are most relevant to this dissertation.

### **Different domains**

To start, let us look at Dorsey’s (2016, 4) second definition of welfarism.

*Welfarism: a theory  $\theta$  of domain  $d$  is welfarist if and only if the  $d$ -evaluation of evaluative targets (acts, in the case of morality; social institutions, in the case of political justice, and so forth) according to  $\theta$  are determined by facts about welfare.*

What is interesting about this definition is that it regards welfarism as a principle that can be applied to many different domains. One can be a welfarist about morality, economics, aesthetics and so forth. For example, someone who thinks that the aesthetic value of a piece of art depends entirely on the amount of well-being it causes can be called a welfarist about aesthetics. Likewise, utilitarians are welfarists about morality, because they believe that an act is morally good if it brings about the greatest possible increase in well-being. In general then, welfarism in a certain domain simply means that the evaluations within that domain are all about well-being.

In the table above, there are two main domains to which welfarism is applied. The first is morality. Of the authors listed, those who talk about welfarism in the context of morality are Dorsey (2016, 1), Keller (2009), Moore and Crisp (1996), Mukerji (2016), Ng (1990), Smuts (2018), Sumner (2003) and – more subtly –

Holtug (2003). While their conceptions of welfarism still differ, they all claim, in one form or another, that morality is all about wellbeing. They all believe that moral judgements – if something is morally good or bad, right or wrong – ultimately depend solely on welfare considerations. The second domain in which academics often talk about ‘welfarism’ is the domain of social prosperity. Welfarism about social prosperity entails that prosperity evaluations ultimately depend on individual well-being alone. In other words, how well a society or community is doing or how much progress a country makes, is considered a matter of how well individuals are faring. In Table 1, the definitions of Baujard (2012), Blackorby, Bossert & Donaldson (2002), Sen (1979) and Weymark (1998) refer to welfarism in this sense.

In short, welfarism can apply to many different domains. Being a welfarist about a certain domain then means that you think the evaluations within that domain are all about well-being. However, different conceptions of welfarism differ in what they mean by a certain domain evaluation being ‘all about’ well-being.

### **Technical and foundational welfarism**

There are two recurring interpretations of what it means for the evaluations in a certain domain to be exclusively about welfare. Firstly, it may mean that individual well-being levels are the only relevant information to take into account when making evaluations in that domain. For example, a welfarist about prosperity might argue that, to measure the prosperity of a given society, we should only measure how well people in that society are doing. This is also what Amartya Sen (1977, 1568) means when he describes welfarism as the principle of “treating social welfare to be functions only of the individual welfare vectors.” As Sen explains, this imposes an informational constraint on the judgement of social prosperity: the relevant information is confined to information about individual welfare levels. In what follows, I call this form of welfarism ‘technical welfarism’.

Secondly, some authors deliberately do not specify in what sense certain evaluations would be ‘all about’

welfare. Instead, they give a more generic definition of welfarism. Take for example Ng: “Roughly speaking, general utilitarianism (or welfarism) is the belief that what makes anything (an act, a change, a policy measure, a rule) morally right or wrong, good or bad, ultimately depends only on its effects on individual utilities” (1990, 171). The crucial word here is ‘ultimately’. The idea is to look beyond the direct and obvious welfare impacts of an act.

A good example is Ng’s discussion of the right not to be tortured (Ng 1981, 529-530). He argues that a welfarist can perfectly think torture is wrong, even in the unlikely event that it leads to a direct positive effect on well-being. The reason is that allowing torture in such cases can harm well-being in the long run, e.g. through attitude formation and feelings of insecurity.

And so, in Ng’s view, a welfarist can advocate an unalienable and absolute right not to be tortured in any circumstances, on the grounds that having such a right is good for individuals. Similarly, Dorsey (2016) explains that for a welfarist an action that has no welfare impact whatsoever can still be wrong. To illustrate this, consider the example of someone who randomly fires a gun without hitting or even scaring anyone. Dorsey believes this action is still wrong, even if it doesn’t harm anyone, because it involves a serious risk of welfare loss.

In both examples, a different form of welfarism is used than the ‘technical’ form described earlier. After all, a technical welfarist would think torture is good in the cases that it leads to higher well-being, and that shooting in the air cannot be wrong if it has no well-being impact. But Ng and Dorsey use the term welfarism a little differently. In their view, welfarism takes well-being as the only ultimate ground for moral evaluations, but without that meaning that simply measuring individual welfare levels provides all necessary information to make these evaluations. The precise way in which certain evaluations are ‘all about’ welfare remains unspecified. This type of welfarism is henceforth called ‘foundational welfarism’. Foundational welfarism boils down to the idea that well-being considerations form the single ultimate foundation for the evaluations within

a given domain.

In conclusion, the word ‘welfarism’ can point to several different principles. Here I have focused on two dividing lines. First, the general idea of welfarism can be applied to many domains, with morality and social prosperity being the most prominent in the literature.

Second, the idea that the evaluations in a certain domain are ‘all about’ welfare can be interpreted in several ways. Usually, authors either prefer a very strict sense, where individual well-being levels provide all necessary information to make (e.g. moral) judgements, or a broader version, where well-being is only ultimately the foundation of such judgements.

## 2.3 APPLICATION OF THE ANALYSIS

In the previous section I examined some differences regarding the meaning of ‘welfarism’. Now, I present two examples of the practical relevance of that analysis: that it can help shed light on confusions in the literature, and that it enables the articulation of more detailed positions on welfarism.

### Clarifying confusions

One of the reasons I have focussed on the two dividing lines presented here (domain and in what sense evaluations are all about well-being) is that they help clarify confusions in the literature. Generally speaking, there are two very popular interpretations of welfarism, which roughly coincide with two distinct bodies of literature. On the one hand, there is the philosophical and moral literature on welfarism. As can be expected, this is primarily concerned with welfarism in the moral domain. What is more, philosophers almost always speak of welfarism in the ‘foundational’ sense. Combining these two aspects, most philosophers characterise welfarism as the principle that, ultimately speaking, individual wellbeing forms the only foundation of moral evaluations (see e.g. Dorsey 2016; Holtug 2003 Keller 2009; Moore & Crisp 1996; Mukerji 2016; Ng 1981, 1990; Smuts 2018; Sumner 2003).

On the other hand, economists and other social scientists are often more concerned with welfarism about social prosperity. Moreover, they often use welfarism in the ‘technical’ sense. For example, Blackorby, Bossert, and Donaldson (2002), Sen (1979) and Weymark (1998) all define welfarism as the idea that we should only measure individual welfare levels to evaluate prosperity.

Unfortunately, the differences between these two bodies of literature are not very well understood and discussed in academia. There are some attempts to analyse different meanings of welfarism, such as Baujard (2009, 2010, 2012), Rechenauer (2003) and Mukerji (2016). But these are either unclear, inconsistent, incomplete or they simply cover different aspects than those relevant here. This insufficient discussion of the different ways in which welfarism is understood in the philosophical and social welfare literature causes confusion and hinders qualitative academic debates. To illustrate this, let us briefly look at the debate between Amartya Sen (1977, 1979, 1981) and Yew-Kwang Ng (1981, 1990).

As mentioned earlier, Amartya Sen uses the term welfarism to refer to the principle of “treating social welfare to be functions only of the individual welfare vectors” (1977, 1568). In the terminology of this dissertation, we can then say that Sen talks about technical welfarism for social prosperity. Sen is a staunch opponent of this form of welfarism and criticises it. He does so on the grounds that welfarism would be restrictive, that it might be incommensurable with liberty and equality, and that it leads to counterintuitive results (1977, 1979). In response, Yew-Kwang Ng (1981, 1990) has defended welfarism against Sen’s attacks. However, Ng has a quite different understanding of welfarism than Sen. Not only does he talk about welfarism for morality instead of prosperity, but he also understands it in a foundational rather than a technical sense. In a later stage of their debate, Sen’s (1981) and Ng’s (1985) conceptions of welfarism do converge to some extent. Still, however, Sen’s arguments apply mainly to technical welfarism for prosperity, whereas Ng’s arguments are more suited to defend foundational welfarism for morality. This observation

has interesting consequences. After all, if Sen convincingly argues against technical welfarism, and Ng persuasively defends foundational welfarism, can we not combine both?

### A semi-welfarist position

This brings us to the second application of my analysis of welfarism. By clearing the murky waters surrounding welfarism, it enables us to formulate more detailed positions on welfarism. A particularly attractive option is to combine foundational welfarism with technical nonwelfarism. I call that combination semi-welfarism. Due to the limited scope of this dissertation, and to ensure a qualitative discussion, I focus on semi-welfarism specifically within the domain of social prosperity<sup>4</sup>. So, what does semi-welfarism for prosperity entail? Let us start with its two principles.

**Foundational welfarism** (for prosperity): The well-being of individuals forms the single ultimate foundation for social prosperity.

As explained earlier, this is a very broad proposition. It does not imply any specific method of concretely measuring prosperity, nor does it say in what way well-being would be the foundation of prosperity. All it says is that what is good for individuals forms the bedrock of social prosperity. In other words: when we keep digging into what makes a community or society good or bad, just or unjust, progressing or in decline, we will eventually stumble upon the good of individuals.

**Technical non-welfarism** (for prosperity): Individual well-being levels do not provide the only relevant information to determine evaluations of social prosperity.

This principle says that, if we want to make any evaluation in the domain of social prosperity (e.g.: How well is this society doing? Does community x have higher prosperity than community y? Has this policy made the country more prosperous?), then

we cannot base this evaluation solely on individual welfare information. The main implication is that we must also use other measures, besides just well-being assessments. This does not mean that well-being information can play no role at all in prosperity evaluations, only that it does not suffice.

Notice further how this definition of technical non-welfarism does not specify which individual well-being levels are insufficient information. That is with good reason. Suppose we want to determine the prosperity of London. Under all forms of technical non-welfarism, simply measuring the well-being levels of all Londoners would not suffice for that. But the version of technical non-welfarism I present here imposes a further restriction. It says that, even if someone would measure the well-being of all individuals in the entire universe, they would still not have all the necessary information to determine London's prosperity. There are simply other things to take into account.

In short, semi-welfarism holds that well-being forms the only ultimate foundation of prosperity, without this meaning that we should only measure well-being to assess it. To illustrate it with a metaphor: imagine we want to build an enormous, magnificent tower named prosperity. Of course, we want to build it there where the soil can best support it. Semiwelfarism says that there is only one material that can give the tower the necessary support, and that is the bedrock called well-being (this amounts to foundational welfarism). However, this does not mean that we want to build our tower there where the bedrock comes to the surface (that would be technical welfarism). Rather, we want layers of e.g. human rights, liberty and equality in between for additional stability. But ultimately, it is well-being that provides the true support for the tower.

Hence, our analysis of welfarism has enabled us to articulate a more detailed position on the relationship between well-being and prosperity. By combining foundational welfarism with technical

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<sup>4</sup> From now on, when I mention any form of welfarism, I refer to that form of welfarism specifically in the domain of social prosperity.

non-welfarism, we can take a position that I called semi-welfarism.

### **Where to go from here**

While I think semi-welfarism is an intriguing position, there is a problem. Unfortunately, it does not directly help us in handling concrete, real-world issues. Take, for example, the question of how to assess London's social prosperity. The semi-welfarist answer to that question is underdetermined. Rather than telling us how we should assess social prosperity, semi-welfarism can only tell us what we should not do. Indeed, the principle of technical nonwelfarism says that simply measuring the well-being of everyone is not enough. Apart from that, the principle of foundational welfarism only tells us that the well-being of individuals should form the single ultimate foundation for prosperity. But this is compatible with many different views on how to measure prosperity. One could for example argue that only universal human rights can guarantee well-being, and that therefore, the better everyone's human rights are fulfilled, the higher London's prosperity. Or if you believe that well-being consists of both being healthy and economically stable, London's prosperity can perhaps be calculated using a combination of data from the NHS and the Bank of England.

It appears that the simple combination of foundational welfarism with technical nonwelfarism is just not specific enough to guide us in concrete cases. This is problematic because it threatens to compromise the value of the current research. "What does it matter that this analysis of welfarism can help us formulate a new position," one might ask, "if that position has no practical significance anyway?" But while semi-welfarism in itself might not be specific enough to be helpful in real-world issues, it can still serve as a basis for more practice-oriented frameworks. This can be achieved in two ways. First, semi-welfarism can be combined with existing frameworks, such as Sen's (1983, 1999) capability approach or prosperity thinking (Moore and Mintchev 2021). These frameworks could then provide the further restrictions that semi-welfarism currently lacks to be applicable in concrete cases.

Second, one could develop a new framework for social prosperity – one specific enough to be helpful in the real world – that takes semi-welfarism as its starting point. In what remains of this dissertation, I pursue this second option. I thus take steps in developing a semi-welfarist framework for prosperity. This not only illustrates what semi-welfarism can look like more concretely, but it also presents a promising way of thinking about prosperity and well-being.

# 3. PROSPERITY WELFARISM

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The first part of this dissertation presented an analysis of the concept ‘welfarism’ and two applications of that analysis. Now, in the second part, I zoom in on one of these two applications: that a more detailed understanding of ‘welfarism’ allows us to formulate new conceptions of the relationship between well-being and prosperity. More concretely, I focus on the position of semi-welfarism and I develop and defend an example framework for thinking about social prosperity that is based on that position. I call it an example framework because it is not the only possible way to develop semi-welfarism into a framework for prosperity. It is simply my take on a framework that allows us to stay as close as possible to its heart. I have chosen to name the framework *Prosperity Welfarism*<sup>5</sup>. Prosperity Welfarism is thus a framework for thinking about prosperity, and semi-welfarism is the combination of principles that forms its core.

Note that this part of the dissertation is explorative in nature. My intention is not to invent a whole new grand theory on prosperity. Rather, the purpose of this enquiry is as follows. First, it illustrates the practical relevance of the conceptual analysis of the first part of this dissertation. Second, it serves as an example of how semi-welfarism can be made more concrete and applicable to real-world issues. And third, Prosperity Welfarism describes a thought-provoking way of thinking about prosperity and its relation to well-being. One that shows great potential.

## 3.1 DEVELOPING PROSPERITY WELFARISM AS A FRAMEWORK

In this section, I develop Prosperity Welfarism as a framework. For now, we only know that it has semi-welfarism as its basis, but as we saw, this

is insufficient for it to be a practically applicable framework for prosperity. To derive and introduce the further necessary provisions I use one specific guiding question, namely: how should we assess the social prosperity of a society? Note that the role of the question is purely rhetorical; it only serves to guide the discussion and development of the framework. My aim is thus not to come up with a readymade answer on how we should measure the social prosperity of a particular city in the real world<sup>6</sup>. To make things a bit more comprehensible and easier to grasp, I address this guiding question specifically with reference to some imaginary city called City.

### Whose well-being?

So, how should we assess City’s social prosperity according to Prosperity Welfarism? We only know that we should not measure well-being alone (technical non-welfarism) and that individual well-being should be the single ultimate foundation for such evaluations (foundational welfarism). One aspect that remains unspecified is whose well-being forms the foundation for assessing how prosperous City is. Is it only the people who currently live in City? Or also people who live outside it? And what about people who will live in City in two years? Or future generations? Is the impact Citizens (i.e. people living in City) have on nonCitizens relevant when evaluating City’s prosperity?

To help answer these questions, I want to introduce a further principle to be incorporated into Prosperity Welfarism. I call this principle spatiotemporal neutrality. To be clear, this principle is not directly implied by foundational welfarism or technical non-welfarism, but it can be a good and useful addition.

**Spatiotemporal neutrality:** Time and place do not make any difference in the value of a particular ‘unit’

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<sup>5</sup> I chose to capitalise these words to emphasise that they refer to a framework and not simply to a principle such as ‘foundational welfarism’ discussed earlier. Note also that, while this framework has ‘welfarism’ in the name, it is actually semi-welfarist.

<sup>6</sup> Anyone interested in real-world prosperity evaluations can refer to Moore and Woodcraft (2019) and IGP (2019), who discuss prosperity in east London



of wellbeing.<sup>7</sup>

What this means is that the well-being of someone living in London today is not worth more than that of someone living in Tuvalu in 200 years. In my opinion, going against this would be unfair discrimination. Since Prosperity Welfarism accepts spatiotemporal neutrality, it has to take all individuals into account, where- and whenever they live. This also means that, within this framework, we have to consider all living beings capable of welfare when assessing how prosperous City is. To make things a bit more comprehensible, we can split up this quasiendless supply of individuals into four groups: current Citizens, future Citizens, currently existing individuals living anywhere else than City, and future individuals who will live somewhere else than City.<sup>8</sup>

For some, it might be counterintuitive to consider all these groups relevant to City's prosperity. After all, when we calculate the UK's GDP, we do not include Mexico's trade figures either. So why would we take the well-being of non-Citizens into account when assessing City's prosperity? First, policies implemented in a particular place do not uniquely affect the people living there, but others as well. It is only fair to recognise that. Moreover, if we do not consider our impact on other people and future generations, some effects are not accounted for anywhere. For example, if each country focussed only on the well-being of its current citizens, no one would address long-term climate change. Next, recall that we are employing a pragmatist research paradigm here. This means, among other things, that we try to characterise concepts like social prosperity in such a way that they are most useful for us. And by taking everyone's well-being into account, we can minimise harmful consequences to individuals distant in space or time.

None of this means that everyone's well-being counts in the same way. There are many ways to

consider someone's well-being. And it is fair to say that, when we want to know how prosperous City is, the well-being of Citizens matters differently than that of non-Citizens. After all, a particular city's policy still impacts its own residents the most. Moreover, it also impacts them most directly, which makes the effect easier to estimate. Hence, I argue that how well a certain society is doing is a matter of both the well-being of its residents and the impact this society has on the well-being of 'outsiders' (i.e. future inhabitants, currently existing individuals not living in that society, and future individuals who will not live there).

### **What is well-being?**

Prosperity Welfarism thus regards a society's prosperity to be a matter of both the well-being of its current inhabitants and the impact it has on the well-being of outsiders. However, this is not yet specific enough. After all, what this means on a more practical level also depends on what you mean by well-being. Hedonists, for example, believe that well-being consists of pleasure and the absence of pain (Crisp 2021). Thus, they might think that evaluating wellbeing means measuring pleasure and pain. In contrast, objectivists might say that well-being consists of e.g. security, self-respect and friendship (Fletcher 2016). In such a view, evaluating well-being requires very different judgments.

But what we mean by well-being is also significant for another reason. Importantly, what substance is given to 'well-being' determines who or what gets included in welfare assessments (see Sumner 2003, 209-212). Different theories of well-being hinge on different properties of individuals. For hedonists, every creature that experiences pleasure and pain also has wellbeing, whereas to an objectivist welfare might require the possibility of friendship and selfrespect. Hence, hedonism will often count in more creatures than objective list theories. Take for

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7 This should not be confused with the principle of anonymity (see Sen 1977, 1546).

8 Note how people living in the past are absent from this list. The reason is that Prosperity Welfarism is supposed to help make a real-world impact, and we cannot change the lives of those who no longer exist anymore.



example bumble bees. Scientific research suggests that they may have subjective experiences, such as pain (Chittka 2022; Klein and Barron 2016). But at the same time, they are less likely to have complex emotions, such as self-respect (Chittka 2022; Baracchi, Lihoreau, and Giurfa 2017). Therefore, wedding Prosperity Welfarism with a hedonist theory of well-being prompts us to take bumble bee's well-being into account, while this might not be necessary if we went for an objective list theory instead.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, Prosperity Welfarism makes two commitments on the meaning of well-being to make the framework usable in concrete situations and decisions. The first commitment concerns welfare's temporal scope. Ever since David Velleman's (1991) influential article "Well-being and Time", a clear distinction has been made in the literature between two different types of well-being. On the one hand, momentary well-being refers to how well off someone is at a particular moment. On the other hand, lifetime well-being refers to the welfare value of an individual's life considered as a whole (Bramble 2014, 2018). The commitment Prosperity Welfarism makes is one to lifetime well-being. Indeed, I believe the relevant form of well-being to consider when talking about social prosperity is that of people's entire lives. To understand why, consider how social prosperity – as a normative concept – is both evaluative and motivational (i.e. action-encouraging). From an evaluative perspective, one must ask what would be better: a society where everyone is happy at this instant but people generally have miserable and deprived lives, or one where everyone has a fantastic life even though they are not doing great at the moment? From a motivational perspective, the question is what we want to promote. Do we want to increase everyone's momentary well-being or rather their lifetime well-being? Since I am drawn to the second answer for both questions, I consider prosperity to be about lifetime rather than momentary well-being. Another reason is that only lifetime well-being makes sense when we are talking about the impact we have on future generations. What would it

even mean to try to have a positive impact on future people's momentary well-being? What moment are we talking about then? Trying to make future lives better as wholes is more viable.

As its second commitment, Prosperity Welfarism considers welfare to be fundamentally about lived experiences. This means that someone's well-being depends on what they feel, think, perceive and experience. One reason for taking such a position is what Haybron (2016) calls the 'phenomenological intuition'. He asks why feeling intensely nauseous would be bad for someone. He argues: "The badness [of nausea] appears to be brutally phenomenological, residing in the quality of the experience itself" (354). In other words, some things, like nausea, seem to be bad for us simply because of how it is like to have them. A view on well-being that concentrates on lived experience can accommodate this intuition. Secondly, making lived experiences central to welfare is necessary for respecting the authority of individuals' experiences and judgements (Hawkins 2010). We should not decide for others what they need or what is good for them but rather, as Moore and Mintchev (2021, 3) argue, listen to them and to what they care about. By emphasising lived experiences, Prosperity Welfarism can fulfil this requirement. Indeed, if well-being is about lived experiences, individuals themselves know best what contributes to or impedes their well-being. Focussing on lived experiences hence makes us attentive to personal, localised and specific needs and desires and respects people's authority over their own lives.

In sum, Prosperity Welfarism makes two commitments: that well-being is about lifetimes and that it is about lived experiences. Note that these commitments are purely formal; they simply explain what well-being means within the framework. It is thus no 'substantive' account of well-being that specifies which particular values or goods constitute welfare (Griffin 1986, 31-32; see also Sumner 2000, 1-2). The reason why I limit myself to making two formal commitments is that I do not want to impose my vision of what exact

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<sup>9</sup> Although this depends on what specific values are included in the specific objective list under consideration

values contribute to someone's welfare and leave room for individuals' own conceptions of a good life. Specifying which particular goods constitute welfare is also unnecessary; Prosperity Welfarism can give us guidance on concrete issues even without doing that.

### **What with epistemic limitations?**

Let us now return to the question of how to assess City's prosperity. We already know that, in Prosperity Welfarism, individual well-being is the only ultimate ground for prosperity, and everyone's well-being is relevant. Furthermore, well-being is conceived as pertaining to lived experiences and entire lifetimes. If all that is the case, then one could propose the following: perhaps we should just measure the lifetime well-being of all Citizens and the impact Citizens have on the well-being of people living in other times and places, and calculate City's prosperity from that. That approach, however, is doomed to run up against epistemic limitations. We can never know the exact impact of what we do here and now on people living in distant times or places. Furthermore, when well-being is a matter of personal lived experiences considered over a whole lifetime, we cannot measure it precisely.

In light of these difficulties, the only option is to rely on a set of indicators that serve as a proxy for well-being and the likely impact of a society on others. However, which particular indicators are most appropriate might differ across places and contexts. Moreover, others (e.g. social indicators experts) are better positioned than I am to provide informed answers to that question. Therefore, I do not compile a set list of indicators. I only identify a few general categories of goods to be taken into account. These four categories, which form the basis of social prosperity assessments within Prosperity Welfarism, are:

- 1) well-being levels of inhabitants;
- 2) guarantees for the basic requirements of well-

being;

3) climate impact, protection of planetary resources and viable eco-systems;

4) global social, political, economic and infrastructural consequences of local action.

I now very briefly explain each of them, again using City as a rhetorical example.

#### Well-being levels

The first and most straightforward factor Prosperity Welfarism takes into account when evaluating City's social prosperity is the Citizens' well-being. Since we characterised wellbeing as a matter of whole lives and lived experiences, some obvious candidate indicators for this are life satisfaction surveys (such as the Satisfaction With Life Scale [Diener et al. 1985]), evaluations of experienced emotions (e.g. the Day Reconstruction Method [Kahneman et al. 2004]) and a Prosperity Index following the model of the IGP (2019), where heterogeneous and localised needs and aspirations play a central role. Of course, combinations of these are also possible.

#### Requirements of well-being

Apart from these 'snapshots' of their well-being, we should also consider Citizens' future endeavours. This means accounting for both the future of people currently living in City and for people who will live in City in the future. However, we cannot possibly know how well off people will be in the future, nor which specific goods will be needed to ensure or enhance their welfare. Therefore, Prosperity Welfarism focusses on universal and intermediate needs and prerequisites for welfare instead (see Doyal and Gough 1991), and especially on how well these prerequisites can be guaranteed. This means for example evaluating how well human rights are protected and how well access to basic human needs like housing, food and education are warranted. It also includes the presence or absence of threats of war, famine, economic crisis, etc. In

short, the question is whether the future of City, and especially its residents, is socially, politically, physically, structurally and emotionally secure.

#### Climate impact

As explained earlier, evaluating City's prosperity means not only assessing the well-being of (current and future) Citizens but also how what Citizens do impacts the well-being of (current and future) individuals not living in City. In this respect, climate impact is of enormous importance. This is for many reasons, such as resource depletion, increased risk of natural disasters, biodiversity loss and rising sea levels. Moreover, depending on how we define 'wellbeing', plants, ecosystems etc. may not only have an instrumental value for Prosperity Welfarism, but also an intrinsic well-being value. In any case, the way we impact our planet is highly relevant to how well we can say we are doing as a society.

#### Global consequences of local action

What we do here and now affects others in multiple ways, not only through the climate. Think of supply chains, the influence of local decisions on political stability elsewhere, long-term economic impacts of policy, how what we do now shapes future attitudes, hopes and expectations, and so on. While I recognise that all these influences are very difficult to accurately evaluate and predict, I believe they are important enough to consider nonetheless. Potentially, much can be learned from research on impact evaluation (e.g. Gertler et al. 2016) and evidence-based policy (e.g. Davies, Nutley, and Smith 2000).

#### **Conclusion of the section**

In this section, I attempted to develop a framework for social prosperity based on the principles of foundational welfarism and technical non-welfarism. The framework, which I baptised Prosperity Welfarism, can be seen as an example of how semi-welfarism can be made a bit more concrete and how the conceptual analysis from the first part of this dissertation can eventually lead to real-world applications. It can also serve as a starting point for further research and as a catalyst to spark debates

on prosperity and its relation to individual wellbeing.

Prosperity Welfarism starts from the principles of foundational welfarism, technical nonwelfarism and spatiotemporal neutrality. It views the prosperity of a particular society as a matter of both the well-being of the people living in that society and the impact the society has on 'outsiders' (i.e. individuals distant in time and/or place). Prosperity Welfarism is not accompanied by a substantive account of the meaning of well-being. It only makes two formal commitments: that well-being is about individual's lives considered as wholes, and that it is about personal lived experiences. Altogether, Prosperity Welfarism identifies four categories of factors that must be taken into account when making evaluations in the domain of social prosperity: (1) individual well-being levels of inhabitants (e.g. through life satisfaction surveys and emotion reports); (2) guarantees for the basic requirements of well-being, such as through the protection of universal rights, a strong social security system, access to basic human needs and absence of (short- and long-term) threats of war, famine, crisis etc.; (3) protection of planetary resources and viable eco-systems; and (4) the global social, political, economic and infrastructural consequences of local action. Now, we turn to the potential advantages and drawbacks of this framework.

## **3.2 THE MERITS OF PROSPERITY WELFARISM**

Prosperity Welfarism aside, there are of course still other approaches to prosperity. Think for example of welfare economics (e.g. Pigou [1952] 2017; Hicks 1939), prosperity thinking (Moore and Mintchev 2021), the capability approach (Sen 1983, 1999; Nussbaum 2000, 2011), the Legatum Prosperity Index (Legatum institute 2021) and human rights approaches. All these approaches provide a framework for thinking about what makes a society 'good' and which values are worth promoting. So why bother with Prosperity Welfarism? Why should anyone prefer it over other frameworks? In this final section, I address these questions and discuss some arguments for and against Prosperity Welfarism. I first give some

advantages and then move to potential criticisms and how they might be answered.

### **Intuitive appeals of foundational welfarism**

Let us begin very abstractly with some attractions of the framework's fundamental principle, i.e. foundational welfarism (for prosperity). An appealing feature of the principle is that it corresponds with some of our basic intuitions. First, most of the things we would say quite obviously make a society better (such as the end of a war) or worse (e.g. famine or poverty) appear to be good or bad primarily because they are good or bad for people. If that is the case, then it makes sense to say that what makes a society good is also a matter of what is good for people.<sup>10</sup>

Secondly, imagine that every living being in the universe was suddenly replaced by a robot version of them that cannot experience warmth, pain, pleasure, disgust, love, or anything else.<sup>11</sup> The world would still look exactly the same and all cities and countries would still exist, only without living beings. Assume also that in the future life would never arise again. Would you still be able to speak of the social prosperity of London in this world? Could you still say that Denmark is doing better than Russia (or vice versa)? This seems absurd. Without living beings, the whole idea of prosperity would lose all meaning. Now ask yourself: why can there be no social prosperity without living beings? I think the best explanation for this is that a society cannot be good or bad if there is no one who it can be good or bad for. In other words, social prosperity must be based on well-being.

### **Practical benefits**

Let us then now move from the intuitive and theoretical attractions to the more practical arguments. Why should anyone choose to adopt Prosperity Welfarism? Firstly, the framework provides a useful guideline and rationale for making concrete (policy) decisions. Consider, for example, the task of finding indicators for prosperity. Almost all currently existing attempts – e.g. Legatum Prosperity Index, OECD Better Life Index, Happy Planet Index, Social Progress Index and the UNDP Human Development Index – try to find a set of indicators which, taken together, can tell us how well we are doing as a society. But how do we know which indicators to include in that set and which not? What criterium can we use to decide if a certain indicator makes the list? Prosperity Welfarism can give a (reasonably) concrete one: include all indicators that help understand how well people are doing in the society under scrutiny, how well well-being is guaranteed or protected and how it influences other parts of the world and future generations. Furthermore, for Prosperity Welfarism, indicators that are more closely related to the well-being (in the lifetime, 'lived experience' sense) of current or future individuals are better suited than indicators that are related to welfare only on a very superficial level. For example, raw household income is probably less relevant for Prosperity Welfarism than 'real household disposable income'<sup>12</sup> since the latter paints a more accurate picture of deprivation (IGP 2019, 6).

An additional advantage of the framework is that it has useful argumentative and explanatory power. It can, for instance, help us understand and explain why a specific practice or ideology is wrong or right. Let us take neoliberalism<sup>13</sup> as an example. We can

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10 Both Bramble (2020, 2) and Keller (2009, 83) make a similar point, but with regards to welfarism for morality.

11 This thought experiment is inspired by Ng (1990, 173-4).

12 Real household disposable income is the part of a household's income that is leftover after subtracting all 'unavoidable costs' (see IGP 2019, 27).

13 While neoliberalism is hard to define and heterogenous in nature, for this example we can follow Biebricher and Johnson (2012, 201-2) who describe it as "a body of ideas and practices that emphasize individual responsibility and freedom (to choose); supports deregulation, privatization and fiscal discipline; and assumes that the more allocation tasks done through markets rather than states, the better."

use the four categories of factors that Prosperity Welfarism considers crucial for prosperity (cf. p. 18) to evaluate if and explain why neoliberalism is good or bad. First, empirical data suggests that living in a neoliberal society negatively impacts both psychological and physical well-being (Schrecker and Bambra 2015; Pilkington 2016; Becker, Hartwich, and Haslam 2021). Studies also show that “citizens are more satisfied with their lives as the level of state intervention into the market economy increases” (Flavin, Pacek, and Radcliff 2011, 251). Second, neoliberalism threatens some fundamental requirements for sustained well-being. Not only does it negatively impact poverty, food security and universal access to sexual and reproductive health services (Sundari Ravindran 2014), but it also jeopardises certain fundamental rights, such as “freedom of speech and expression, of education and economic security, rights to organize unions, and the like” (Harvey 2005, 181). Third, several studies suggest that the environment is negatively impacted when markets are liberated (e.g. Barnett and Pauling 2005; Altieri and Rojas 1999). And lastly, Peeters et al. (2015, 99-102) argue, liberal capitalism encourages moral disengagement from social justice issues. That opens the door to a morality that favours the own present society at the expense of those living in other parts of the world and of future generations<sup>14</sup>. In sum, all four categories are in danger. So, Prosperity Welfarism gives concrete stepping stones for explaining or understanding certain things, such as what is wrong with neoliberalism.

Another reason to adopt Prosperity Welfarism is its emphasis on context-specific experiences and needs<sup>15</sup>. What people need, want and care about is diverse, multi-dimensional, and culturally and historically specific (Moore 2015; Moore and Woodcraft 2019; IGP 2019). Therefore, what makes our societies better is also plural and diverse, and “while the challenges of prosperity may be global, the solutions will not be” (Moore 2015, 804). This

means that we should be attentive to localised and personal needs, opportunities and desires and that our “institutions, public policy frameworks, economic models, and investment strategies [...], and the metrics used to measure prosperity, need to pay closer attention to situated understandings of prosperity” (Moore and Woodcraft 2019, 290). Prosperity Welfarism can accommodate these needs because it regards well-being to be fundamentally a matter of lived experience. Taking this seriously also means taking seriously the fact that local knowledge is essential in designing strategies for the advancement of well-being and, hence, prosperity. Prosperity Welfarism thus gives us a powerful incentive to care for people and their personal experiences.

In addition, Prosperity Welfarism is also attentive to structural issues and interconnectedness. Living beings never exist in a vacuum, but are inevitably embedded in all sorts of systemic constraints. For us humans, moreover, well-being is relational and interactive (White 2015; Atkinson et al. 2017). Hence, when trying to make individuals better off, we should be considerate about the circumstances in which they live and how systemic factors shape these circumstances. Furthermore, all our actions have wide and complex consequences. We cannot be blind to this and leave those whose world we shape to their own devices. By factoring in our impact on individuals distant in place and time, Prosperity Welfarism compels us to be conscious of this. That way, prosperity becomes a relational and collective concept where lived experience goes hand in hand with structural and interactive concerns (Moore and Woodcraft 2019, 289; Moore and Mintchev 2021, 7).

Last but certainly not least, Prosperity Welfarism can serve as a guard against fetishism. Fetishism, at least in the sense I’m occupied with here, refers to the phenomenon whereby a certain value or good that is only valuable for its role in promoting another good is treated as having intrinsic value and hence

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14 This discussion of neoliberalism builds on some of my previous research; see Herrebosch (2021).

15 In this paragraph, and also the next, I draw heavily on prosperity thinking (see Moore 2015; Moore and Mintchev 2021).

promoted for its own sake, up to the point where this has negative consequences<sup>16</sup>. An excellent example of this is GDP (Gross Domestic Product). GDP was originally designed to measure market performance and economic output. But over the years, its use has evolved to the point where it now serves as the main indicator of prosperity and as an end in itself (Coyle 2014; Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi 2010; Stiglitz, Fitoussi, and Durand 2019). This is a problem because GDP tells us nothing about how we are doing. “So what if GDP goes up,” Stiglitz (2019) asks, “if most citizens are worse off?” GDP has thus become an object of fetishism. It is now promoted in its own right, rather than used as a tool for improving lives. This can not only happen with indicators like GDP, but also with laws, rights, institutions, values, and so on. By regarding all these things not as goods in themselves but as means to an end, Prosperity Welfarism calls out such excesses. This is perhaps its greatest appeal. It asks us to re-evaluate institutions, laws and indicators when they no longer serve us. It keeps our eyes on the prize so that we are not blinded by mirages. And it compels us to focus on what really matters.

### **The value of other goods**

We now turn to some arguments that can be made against Prosperity Welfarism and how these might be countered. First, let me remark that many critiques of welfarism are based on misrepresentations or misinterpretations. Some take a narrow view of well-being, while others make wrong or hostile assumptions about the nature of welfarism (Keller 2009, 91-92; see also Blackorby, Bossert, and Donaldson 2002, 12). Here, however, I solely focus on concerns that cannot be dismissed so easily.

An often heard critique of welfarism is that, by considering no other value than welfare, it is too restrictive (e.g. Sen 1977, 1979). Even if well-being

is relevant for prosperity, other goods like liberty or knowledge might be too. The criticism is, then, that Prosperity Welfarism fails to appreciate that there are other values than welfare that also non-instrumentally<sup>17</sup> make a society better. I now discuss how one might defend Prosperity Welfarism against such charges. Note that there are so many possible goods that might be intrinsically valuable for a society that I cannot cover them all. Consequently, I discuss only a few candidates, from which the general strategy of dealing with this type of objection will become clear.

Consider equality first. Is an equal society not generally better than an unequal one? To start, Prosperity Welfarism need not deny this. After all, to say that equality has no intrinsic, ultimate value for prosperity is not to deny it all value. A welfarist can perfectly argue that equality usually makes a society better simply because it makes people better off. And indeed, research suggests that more equal societies score better on mental health, physical health, obesity, education, violence, and many more aspects (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009, 2018).

But does equality have no value independent of its influence on well-being? Is it not good in itself? To evaluate that possibility, consider the following example.

Imagine a remote village entirely composed of poor, deprived people. Now suddenly, one person in the village is given a bank account with one billion pounds in it. However, nobody, not even the person herself, knows this (or will ever know it).

Equality<sup>18</sup> in the village has just decreased dramatically. But has the society become worse? And if later the rich person is killed – or even if they simply disappear – the equality would significantly increase again. But would this make the society

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16 I borrow the idea of fetishism from Simon Keller (2009).

17 With this I mean that the value in question would make society better in and of itself and not because it promotes some other good.

18 In this example, equality is regarded as a merely monetary matter, but a similar example can be constructed for other forms of inequality.

better? Intuitively, it would not.

But if equality had intrinsic value for prosperity, the answer to both questions should be 'yes'. This supports the view that equality cannot be relevant for social prosperity in and of itself. Rather, its value might be derived from its relevance to well-being.

A similar response can be given to anyone suggesting that the protection of rights has an intrinsic value for prosperity. To start, Prosperity Welfarism does not deny that rights make a society better. Indeed, rights can perfectly be defended on a welfarist basis for the long-run positive impact they have on well-being (see e.g. Hardin 1986; Kuflik 1986; Talbott 2010). But this is not what is at stake. Rather, the question is whether rights can serve as an ultimate, irreducible, ground for prosperity. Ng (1990, 180-81) thinks they cannot. One of his arguments is that you can always raise the question: why right X?<sup>19</sup> Why would having this right increase prosperity? Often, one can answer: because having right X is good for people. Of course, you can also give other answers, for example that the right to a fair public hearing is necessary to avoid abuse of power. But then one could ask: why would abuse of power impede prosperity? Ng believes that if you keep pressing hard enough with such questions, you usually end up with a welfarist answer (180). That would mean that it is welfare and not rights that are the ultimate ground of prosperity. Moreover, for every right we can think of, there is an imaginable situation where maintaining this right would have dramatic long-term consequences for well-being. During the Covid-19 crisis, for example, many countries saw their right to freedom of assembly suspended in order to save lives. In cases like this, it would be fetishistic to uphold a right for the sake of that right even when it

makes people worse off (Keller 2009).

However, none of this means that rights become entirely conditional in a welfarist framework. We still have good reasons to treat certain rights as if they were intrinsically valuable. As Ng (1990, 181) explains:

once certain rights or moral principles are accepted, even initially for their promotion of welfare, they tend to be, in time, valued for their own sake by most individuals. Their violation or just suspension may thus be disturbing to us. [...] Also, the suspension of one right or principle to avoid a welfare-disastrous outcome may also tend to make other (still welfare-enhancing) rights and principles less sacred. This may have the disadvantage of reducing their observance and thus reduce welfare.

I would add that simply the fact that a right is unconditional can also have a positive welfare impact by providing a sense of security. For instance, the fact that the right to life is considered an unalienable human right makes me worry less about being murdered and hence increases my emotional well-being. Thus, Prosperity Welfarism does not necessarily destabilise rights; making them unconditional is often the best thing to do.<sup>20</sup>

To sum up, when Prosperity Welfarism is criticised for not taking sufficient account of some good X, which is supposed to have intrinsic relevance for prosperity, it can be defended on three grounds. First, one can show that X can also be defended on a welfarist basis. Second, we can ask why X would increase prosperity, and keep pressing on that question until we hit a welfarist answer. Third, one can argue that it is fetishistic to uphold the promotion of X even if it benefits no one. As Keller (2009, 91) phrases it: "It should give a non-

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19 Ng's arguments apply to welfarism for morality rather than for social prosperity, but after some adaptations, they work here as well.

20 One might object that, even if a certain right is considered unconditional in Prosperity Welfarism, the unconditionality of that right is still made conditional. While this is true, I see this not as a problem, but rather as a safeguard against fetishism



welfarist pause when she is presented with a case in which her view recommends that we make some individuals worse off, just so as to uphold a value that, in this case, is of no good to anyone.”<sup>21</sup>

### Further potential problems

Someone reading this dissertation might ask themselves something like this: “How can you know what makes a society good? Or what well-being means? Should we not respect that everyone can have different ideas on that? Moreover, by making prosperity simply a matter of well-being, Prosperity Welfarism makes it all very monolithic. Should we not foster the existing heterogeneity of worldviews and design a pluriverse<sup>22</sup> instead? Should we not listen to what matters to people instead of deciding for them that only well-being matters?” This is perhaps the weightiest critique of Prosperity Welfarism I can think of. Several relevant points are raised. Let me break it down a little.

We start with the first two questions: how can I know what makes a society good? Or what well-being means? Part of the answer is that I do not claim to know these things. Recall that this dissertation adopts a pragmatist research paradigm. As such, I am not claiming any ‘truth’ here but rather proposing a view that I think can help us forward. The concepts I employ (such as ‘prosperity’ and ‘well-being’) and the way I present them are then not my interpretation of some objective entity, but rather conceptions constructed in such a way as to be most useful. Still, as White and Blackmore (2016) explain for well-being, these concepts are often very multi-faceted, having different meanings across cultures. Am I not imposing my own, singular vision on them?

This corresponds to the second part of this critique: Should we not foster the existing heterogeneity of worldviews and design a pluriverse instead? One

where everyone can have their own view on what makes a life or a society good? In response to that, I should point out that Prosperity Welfarism does leave room for many different worldviews: it leaves people free to consider what their own well-being consists in, what a good life looks like, what they want and need, what their community should look like to make it flourish, how to live their lives, and so on. For instance, Prosperity Welfarism does not claim that well-being consists of e.g. happiness, friendship and knowledge, only that it is about all the lived experiences of one’s lifetime. And that is compatible with many takes on what well-being means more concretely. Still, some worldviews might not fit into Prosperity Welfarism. But that, I believe, is inevitable. After all, a framework for prosperity has to say at least something about what prosperity means. Moreover, I think the worldviews that do not fit into Prosperity Welfarism are of the kind that will not necessarily be missed; e.g. one where torturing passers-by is considered good. In short, while I recognise that some possible worldviews might be incompatible with Prosperity Welfarism, the framework is kept as generic as possible, leaving room for many different conceptions of the good life.

Let me then move to the last part of the critique: Should we not listen to what matters to people instead of deciding for them that only well-being matters? Why focus on what is good for people instead of on what they care about? To start, what matters to people is of enormous importance to their well-being. Promoting what someone cares about or what makes someone better off are hence almost the same thing in practice. I do not see many realistic scenarios where we would face a trade-off between the two. Yet they are not the same. As David Sobel (1998, 271) puts it: “what matters to us and what makes our lives go well are often different things. We are forced to choose between them [...]” So why choose well-being? First, making social

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21 One exception to this tripartite strategy is the welfarist stance on sustainability and the value of nature. Depending on how you define ‘well-being’, trees, insects and other living beings might be welfare subjects as well. If that is the case, then their value for prosperity is not only instrumental but also intrinsic.

22 Arturo Escobar (2017, xvi) describes a pluriverse as “a world where many worlds fit.”



prosperity about what matters to individuals runs into troubles when talking about nonhuman living beings. Can we say anything matters to an ant? We do not know. And even if we were sure ants care about things too, we cannot know what they care about. Hence, it is very difficult to extend a conception of prosperity focussed on what matters to people to nonhumans. Second, one of the strongest arguments for focussing on what matters to people rather than on welfare is that we cannot know what makes someone better off unless we know what matters to them. This, however, says nothing about welfare being the ultimate foundation of prosperity. Third, imagine a world where nobody cares about air pollution, even though it makes people healthier and happier. Even in that world, would reducing air pollution not make societies more prosperous? And conversely, imagine a country ruled by a much-loved but also cruel tyrant. It matters a lot to all citizens that they are ruled by this tyrant, even though he is known to kill people for fun and make the lives of his subordinates miserable. Do we not think this tyrant makes his country worse off? These examples indicate that something that matters to nobody can make a society better by making people better off (as in the air pollution case), while something that matters to everyone can still reduce prosperity if it makes people worse off (as in the tyrant's case). Hence, if we really have to choose between what makes people's lives go well and what matters to them, as Sobel demands, I believe well-being would be the best choice.

Another potential criticism is that Prosperity Welfarism is still not specific enough to provide answers to concrete policy questions. Did I not promise to develop the rather vague position of semi-welfarism into a framework that is better applicable in real-world situations? Then what does it even mean to e.g. "guarantee basic requirements of well-being" in specific contexts? While I accept that Prosperity Welfarism does not give ready-to-use answers to concrete cases, I do not see this as an issue. In my opinion, local circumstances and context play an important role in any concrete policy

question. Therefore, no framework can ever be so universal that it can precisely tell us what to do in the real world. Rather, it should serve as guidance and as a starting point from which concrete solutions can be developed. Furthermore, this discussion of Prosperity Welfarism is only an initial exploration. So, while Prosperity Welfarism gives no ready-made answers to concrete policy questions, it can still be useful.

The final potential issue for Prosperity Welfarism discussed here is that there is no empirical evidence in support of it. I fully support this criticism. Since there have been no experiments or real-life applications of the framework yet, we cannot know if adopting it would have desirable consequences. And indeed, in its current form, I do not think Prosperity Welfarism is ready to be immediately translated into policy. Nevertheless, it deserves to be considered as a valuable alternative to current ways of thinking about social prosperity and its relationship with well-being, and as a genuine object of study. This way, it can hopefully be developed further and brought to maturity. Because seeing the potential in a semi-welfarist conception of prosperity can mark a valuable break in perspective and a shift in mentality. One that constantly reminds us of the question: what are we doing this all for?

## 4. CONCLUSION

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In this dissertation, I have attempted to gain a better understanding of the concept 'welfarism'. I have also explored the value of this increased conceptual clarity for the practice and theory of prosperity, and in particular its relationship to well-being. To this end, I began with a conceptual investigation of 'welfarism'. In its most general form, welfarism denotes that only individual well-being is ultimately and intrinsically valuable. However, the research conducted here reveals two important points where different conceptions of welfarism diverge. First, welfarism can be applied to various domains. Most commonly it is used within either morality or social prosperity. Second, what it means to be a welfarist within a certain domain is also ambiguous. On the one hand, it can mean that individual well-being levels provide all necessary information to make (e.g. ethical) judgements. This version I call 'technical welfarism'. On the other hand, welfarism can also mean, more broadly, that well-being is the only ultimate foundation of such judgements. This I call 'foundational welfarism'. This analysis of 'welfarism' not only helps us clarify some confusions in the literature but also allows us to articulate new conceptions of prosperity. One such conception that is particularly interesting is the combination of foundational welfarism with technical non-welfarism. I have named that combination 'semi-welfarism'. With this, we have answered the first research question: what are the main differences between various understandings of welfarism in the literature and how can illuminating these differences be useful?

In the second part of the dissertation, I developed an example framework for social prosperity based on semi-welfarism. I named this framework Prosperity Welfarism. Prosperity Welfarism considers the success of a given society to be a matter of both the well-being of those who currently reside there and the influence the society has on those who do not (where the latter may be remote in time and/or location). The kind of well-being it is concerned with is lifetime well-being, and it regards well-being as a matter of personal lived experiences. Altogether, Prosperity Welfarism

proposes four types of elements to consider for assessing social prosperity: (1) individual well-being levels of residents, (2) guarantees of basic welfare requirements, (3) protection of planetary resources and viable ecosystems, and (4) global social, political, economic, and infrastructural consequences. This framework is not only intuitively appealing, it also has distinct practical benefits. Prosperity Welfarism presents a helpful guideline for making concrete decisions, has useful explanatory power, highlights context-specific experiences and needs, is responsive to structural issues and interconnectedness and can serve as a safeguard against fetishism. I have also explored how the framework might be defended when under attack, for example for being too restrictive or leaving no room for a plurality of worldviews. Hence, I have also answered the second research question: what can a semi-welfarist framework for prosperity look like, and what are the potential merits of such a framework?

The broader significance of this research lies primarily in its contributions to pressing debates on what it means for a society to thrive, and in particular on the relation between prosperity and well-being. In a time marked by increasing critiques of the use of GDP as a measure for progress and as an end-goal for policy, we are challenged with finding new definitions of and indicators for prosperity. The research conducted here can contribute to that quest by supplying new conceptual tools that help refine discussions and by introducing innovative arguments about the value of well-being to the domain of social prosperity. Moreover, this dissertation presents a promising framework for thinking about prosperity that, as I have argued, has both intuitive and practical appeal. However, since this framework is still in its infancy, additional research is necessary to develop it further and bring it to fruition. Follow-up research is also needed to gain empirical insight into what effects the application of Prosperity Welfarism would have in the real world. All in all, the ideas presented here form an intriguing and thought-provoking way of

thinking about prosperity and well-being. They warn us to not fall for fetishism and they urge us to always remain thoughtful of what really matters.

For instead of promoting “everything [...] except that which makes life worthwhile” (Kennedy 1968, quoted in Stiglitz Fitoussi and Durand 2019, 2), it is time to start doing the exact opposite.

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# THE EFFECT OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN URBAN AND PERI-URBAN AGRICULTURAL FARMS ON THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF VOLUNTEERS

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## Abstract

This dissertation explores the experience of volunteers at two contrasting food-growing spaces within Greater London, Sutton Community Farm and The Wolves Lane Centre in Haringey. Both spaces combine commercial and social objectives, but differ regarding their organization, governance and operation, however, both rely heavily on the contributions made by volunteers. Using an exploratory mixed methods research design, incorporating a survey, semi-structured interviews and participant observation, the aim of this dissertation is to investigate the volunteers' motivations and the benefits they derive from volunteering, particularly those relating to health and well-being. The research builds up on studies undertaken, largely in community gardens primarily in North America but also Europe, and contributes to the endeavor to design more robust research instruments for measuring the benefits accruing to volunteers in these contexts. Based on responses to the Office for National Statistics' well-being questions (ONS4), the findings in this research show that volunteers at both sites report higher well-being scores and lower anxiety than average for England (and their local area). However, the differentials are insufficient to show statistical significance once adjustments to reflect the predominantly female volunteer cohorts at both sites are considered. Nevertheless, the multiple benefits articulated by the urban farm volunteers include those relating to physical and mental health and well-being. These findings are congruent with O'Brien et al.'s (2010) research into outdoor volunteering and Seligman's (2011) work on human flourishing. In conclusion, I contend these urban farms exhibit qualities associated with Gesler's (1992) therapeutic landscapes.

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## List of abbreviations

BMI Body Mass Index

LWA Landworkers' Alliance

OBR Office for Budget Responsibility

ONS Office for National Statistics

ONS4 the ONS four self-reporting well-being questions

POJ Participant Observation Journal

SCF Sutton Community Farm

UA Urban Agriculture

UPUA Urban and peri-urban agriculture

WL Wolves Lane

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 CURRENT CONTEXT

A unique coalescence of circumstances may provide greater opportunities for urban and periurban agriculture (UPUA) in the UK. Both are increasingly seen as making a key contribution to feeding cities and transitioning to more sustainable agriculture (Biel 2016). In addition, Covid19, Brexit and war in Ukraine show how vulnerable long supply chains are in tumultuous times, particularly for a country importing 84% of its fruit and 46% of its vegetable requirement (Revoredo-Giha and Costa-Font 2020). Moreover, The United Nations, citing climate change as the defining issue of our time (UN 2021), has urged governments to take proportionate and timely action. This includes building resilient food systems, which draw upon a variety of approaches for production and distribution - both large and small-scale.

Each stressor mentioned above strengthens the case for improving UK food security by producing food closer to UK consumers. This is consistent with the Johnson administration's food strategy and objective to deliver a 'sustainable, nature positive, affordable food system that provides choice and access to high quality products that support healthier and home-grown diets for all' (Defra 2022:5). Moreover, for many urbanites, growing food is entirely practical as they seek protection from rising food prices (Jones 2022). Nevertheless, the motivation to engage in food growing, particularly as a community endeavor, could be part of the broader shift in western society to postmaterialist values (Inglehart and Welzel 2005), whereby 'political freedom and participation, self-actualization, personal relationships, creativity, and care for the environment' (De Witte 2004:251), assume greater priority. Arguably, this is consistent with the emergence of 'Agrileisure', which describes 'what occurs at the intersection of agriculture, leisure and social change' (Amsden and McEntee 2011:38), exemplified by the growth in agrotourism, farmers markets and community supported agriculture i.e. agriculture-themed activities including an element of leisure and recreation.

Nevertheless, Inglehart and Welzel's (2005) postmaterialist conception of social movements and environmental concerns are seen by Schlosberg (2019) as inadequate in explaining increased participation in sustainable materialist movements, where the emphasis is on the collective and the political rather than the individualist and consumerist. These movements, including Land Workers' Alliance (LWA) and La Via Campesina, aim to find more just and sustainable ways of meeting basic needs, including food, and represent 'an environmental politics for everyday life and practice' (Schlosberg 2019:2). They arise from disillusionment with existing political and economic structures, and desire to solve complex problems. Hence, Tormey (2015:7) writes 'politically engaged citizens don't vote; they act.'

Research citing the socio-cultural benefits of UPUA, including community cohesion and engagement (e.g. Kingsley et al. 2019), economic and education opportunities (e.g. Fifolt et al. 2018), and health and well-being benefits, is increasing. Regarding the latter, most research focuses on allotment holders and community gardeners in North America and Europe (Ilieva et al. 2022). However, little research has been undertaken concerning the well-being and health benefits afforded to volunteers in urban and peri-urban farms (Artmann and Sartison 2018), including community farms. Nevertheless, identifying co-benefits would enhance arguments being advanced by LWA, a union of farmers, growers, foresters and land-based workers, campaigning for 'a food and land-use system based on agroecology, food sovereignty and sustainable forestry that furthers social and environmental justice' (LWA n.d., n.p.), and others, who see 'decentralised local and short supply chains ..... [as] the route to a fairer, more sustainable, and more resilient food system' (LWA n.d., n.p.).

Expanding UPUA is considered important for this and LWA is campaigning for planning policy changes which support ecological farming, expansion of local food production (Laughton et al. 2020), and

establishment of a local food infrastructure fund to invest in Community Supported Agriculture and community-owned farms (Thompson et al. 2021). Acknowledging UPUA's wider benefits may provide impetus to tackle barriers the sector faces, not least the allocation of farm subsidies (Wheeler 2020), whereby agricultural holdings under 5 hectares, excluded from the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy's direct payments scheme, will not be eligible for its replacement: the government's Environmental Land Management Subsidy (ELMS). This disproportionately affects urban agricultural enterprise which typically are smallscale and LWA is lobbying for 'greater alignment between subsidy payments and public health goals' (LWA 2021 n.p.). Hence, a more holistic understanding of UPUA might have direct policy impacts.

This research project aims to contribute to addressing the research gaps identified above

using evidence from two agroecological food growing spaces: Sutton Community Farm and the Wolves Lane Center, in Greater London. Both sites have commercial and social purposes, which are explored later. Working with LWA, I have designed this research to identify any health and well-being benefits perceived by volunteers at these sites. The aim is to develop an evidential base for the health and well-being benefits of engaging in community-based agroecological urban agriculture as a complement to analyses of the claimed environmental and economic benefits and in doing so add, albeit cautiously, to the wider calls for policy to support this type of farming.

The Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Well-being Framework (Figure 1)<sup>1</sup> provides the starting point for evaluating volunteers' well-being. This combines subjective measures of well-being (A), aspects of the individual's physical, mental, material, and social

<sup>1</sup> More detailed versions of this framework can be found at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuresofnationalwellbeingdashboard/2018-4-25>.

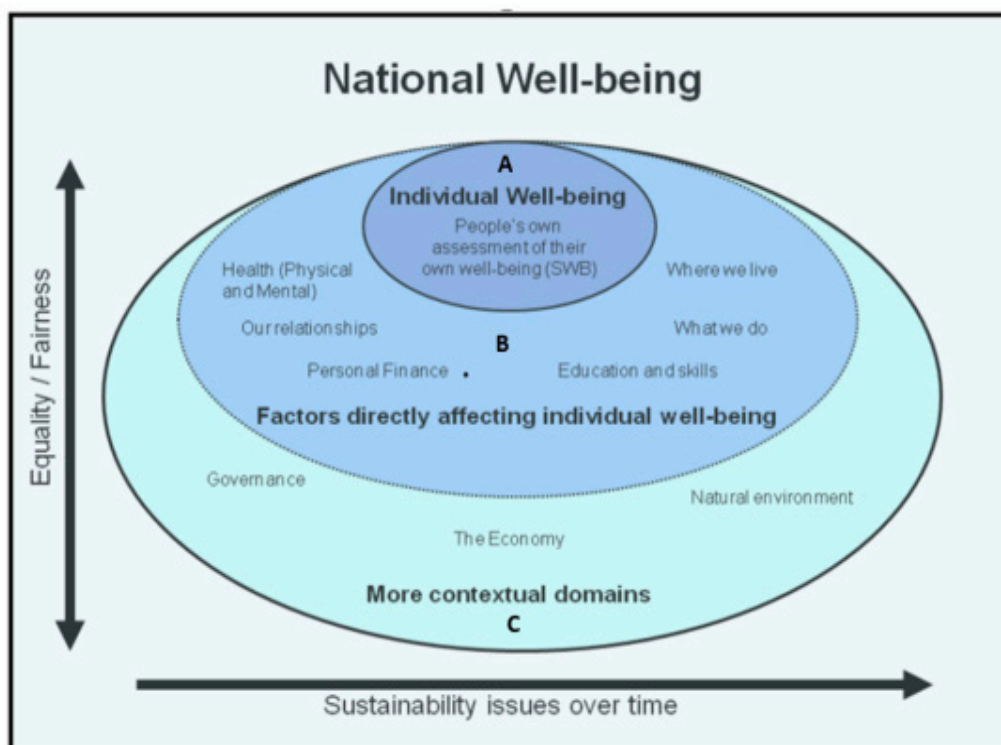


Figure 1: United Kingdom ONS well-being framework . Source: Adapted from Patterson (2012: 4).

condition likely to affect the former (B), and contextual domains reflecting national circumstances (C). Taken as whole, the framework enables a greater understanding of volunteers' data. Regarding individual/subjective well-being, three different approaches are included: evaluative, experience/affect and eudemonic (Hicks et al. 2013). Thus, volunteers were asked, using the ONS4 questions, to gauge their life satisfaction (evaluation), emotional state (experience/affect), and whether their life is meaningful (eudemonic).

Eudaimonia is further explored by considering factors associated with human flourishing, including positive relationships, sense of purpose or meaning, accomplishment and achievement (Seligman 2011). Positive relationships are fundamental to human well-being, affecting mental and physical health (Mertika et al. 2020) and longevity (Holt-Lunstad and Smith 2012). Similarly, sense of purpose is predictive of health and longevity and increases emotional resilience (Shaeffer et al. 2013). Furthermore, individuals who experience accomplishment or achievement through achieving personally meaningful goals, particularly those which contribute to personal growth and community, report higher subjective well-being (Emmons 2003). Nutritional health and perceived changes in physical fitness also feature in this study since both are known to affect mental and physical health (Firth et al. 2020). In turn, these influence assessments of subjective well-being.

## 1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

As noted above, multiple organisations are campaigning for greater land access to support sustainable local food systems. Critical analysis of any social, physical, dietary and/or mental health benefits arising from volunteering on agroecological urban farms, may assist in building an evidence base which strengthens the case for better policy support for this type of farming. Furthermore, working with LWA, this research also aims to address the paucity of research in this area and if benefits do arise for the volunteers, identify what these are and whether they are the same as or different from those benefits reported by volunteers in other UPUA typologies. As this study incorporates two sites, the aim is also

to establish whether there are differences in the perceived benefits specified by volunteers at the different locations and what factors contribute to this. In addition, given the absence of robust research instruments to measure the health and well-being benefits of engagement with UPUA (Ilieva et al. (2022), this dissertation hopes to contribute towards rectifying this by adopting and adapting reliable and validated well-being metrics established by the ONS to ascertain whether these are a useful means of measuring volunteers' self-reported well-being.

The research questions addressed in this dissertation are therefore:

**Does public engagement in urban/peri-urban agricultural enterprises affect the health and well-being of volunteers?**

**If so, what are these impacts and how might they be measured?**

**How do these impacts vary across different urban/peri-urban enterprises represented by two case studies and why?**

## 1.3 RESEARCH SITES

This research focuses on two case studies using an agroecological approach to grow fruit and vegetables for sale and donation to other projects. As such, both fulfil Kirby et al.'s (2021) and Santo et al.'s (2016) definitions of an urban farm. The farms, located on local authority land, are rooted in their communities and have social as well as commercial objectives. Both farms have large volunteer bases, making them particularly suitable for assessing the nature and extent of perceived benefits accruing to volunteers.

The first site, Sutton Community Farm (SCF) (Figure 2), in the south London borough of Sutton, is peri-urban and established in 2010. Its stated purpose is 'to improve well-being and enhance community through people-powered food production that is good for people and planet' (SCF 2022:9). The farm is a Community Benefit Society owned by 450 shareholder members, each of whom is eligible to vote on some decisions influencing how the farm operates. However, the 8strong Management

Committee, drawn from the local community and employees, take the strategic decisions, with day-to-day operations run by 15 employees.

The second site, The Wolves Lane Centre (hereafter Wolves Lane), has a more urban location in Wood Green, North London. Once a plant nursery for Haringey Council (Figure 3), it is the site of a proposed market garden city (Ubele 2020) and will undergo major development in autumn 2022. Wolves Lane is governed by a consortium comprising Ubele, 'an African diaspora led, infrastructure plus organization' (Ubele n.d n.p) and OrganicLea, a

large community food project based in north-east London. Wolves Lane hosts several community and commercial horticultural enterprises. Each has its own management structure and employees, and all provide volunteering opportunities. The center manager runs volunteer induction and liaises with the enterprises.

The sites and the operation of these enterprises are discussed in more detail in Appendices 1 and 2.



Figure 2: Sutton Community Farm (SCF). Source: Sutton Community Farm.



Figure 3: Wolves Lane Centre entrance as it looks now, showing its previous use as local authority plant nursery and garden center. It remains home to the historic Palm House, which will be retained



## 1.4 DISSERTATION STRUCTURE

In chapter 2, the literature review outlines the diversity of urban agricultural enterprise and its potential contribution to a sustainable food strategy. The review then takes a different tack to focus on research into the wider socio-cultural benefits reportedly associated with UPUA, before exploring studies documenting health and well-being benefits. This chapter develops an argument from the literature for more comprehensive research taking into consideration a range of potential health and well-being benefits which may accrue to volunteers on urban farms in particular, and that a study incorporating a reliable and standardized approach to assessing wellbeing would be of value. Chapter 3 sets out the exploratory mixed methods design adopted, which included primary interviews, survey and participant observation, to evaluate volunteers' well-being and examine benefits gained through volunteering. Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the primary research results. The final chapter identifies the main themes emerging from research at both sites, seeking to highlight and explain key similarities as well as important differences, before suggesting that these urban farms are analogous with therapeutic landscapes (Gesler 1992; Williams 1999, 2007). Thereafter, I conclude by elucidating the limitations of this research and what learning might be taken forward to inform future research in this field.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

---

### 2.1 WHAT IS URBAN AGRICULTURE?

Although Beilin and Hunter (2011:523) define urban agriculture straightforwardly as ‘encompassing a wide range of agricultural food production practices occurring within city boundaries’, this belies the term’s usage in practice, which is ‘more diverse and messy’

(Granzow and Jones (2020:382). I adopt Mougeot’s (2001) definition of urban agriculture which builds on Smit et al.’s (1996) earlier characterization. This definition explicitly includes the periurban, which is distinct and increasingly important (Opitz et al. 2015):

*‘an industry located within (intra-urban) or on the fringe (peri-urban) of a town, a city or a metropolis, which grows and raises, processes and distributes a diversity of food and nonfood products, (re-) using largely human and material resources, products and services found in and around that urban area, and in turn supplying human and material resources, products and services largely to that urban area’ (Mougeot 2001:10).*

However, I would also amend this to include Pölling et al.’s (2015:21) definition which notes that: *‘The importance of the production in proportion to the other societal benefits can vary strongly (...), both, the production-oriented side or the co-benefit-oriented side may prevail depending on the individual practices of an urban farming operation.’*

This reflects the different values, motivations and priorities of actors within UPUA, where grassroots, community-led, together with organization and institution-led initiatives, for-profit and not-for-profit enterprises co-exist. Research in the Global North focuses primarily on initiatives offering alternatives to the conventional industrialized agri-food regime (Aerts et al.

2016), however, productivist agriculture may dominate peri-urban areas (Bousbaine et al 2020). Hence there is widespread acknowledgment of the diversity within UPUA (Figure 4).

Pragmatically, this literature review incorporates studies from a range of peri/urban foodgrowing spaces, including, home gardens, allotments, community gardens, urban and community farms. A lack of consistency in terminology adopted within the research literature is apparent, reflecting different geographical and cultural contexts, and it can be difficult to tease out defining characteristics (Golden 2013). Therefore, broad definitions are adopted here. Thus, a community garden is ‘any piece of land (publicly or privately held) that is cultivated by a group of people rather than a single family or individual’ (McEldowney 2017:3). Allotments are viewed as a subtype of community gardens by some (e.g. van den Berg et al. 2010). However, they are distinct, at least in the UK where legislation precludes their use for financial gain (McVey et al. 2018).

For urban farms, the typology is evolving but they ‘are generally distinguished from gardens by the intent to produce goods for sale’ (Santo et al. 2016:1). Zero-acreage farming/ZFarming, a subtype of urban agriculture ‘characterized by the non-use of farmland or open space’ (Specht et al. 2014:35), does not feature significantly in this review as research to date focusses primarily on its sustainability rather than socio-cultural co-benefits.

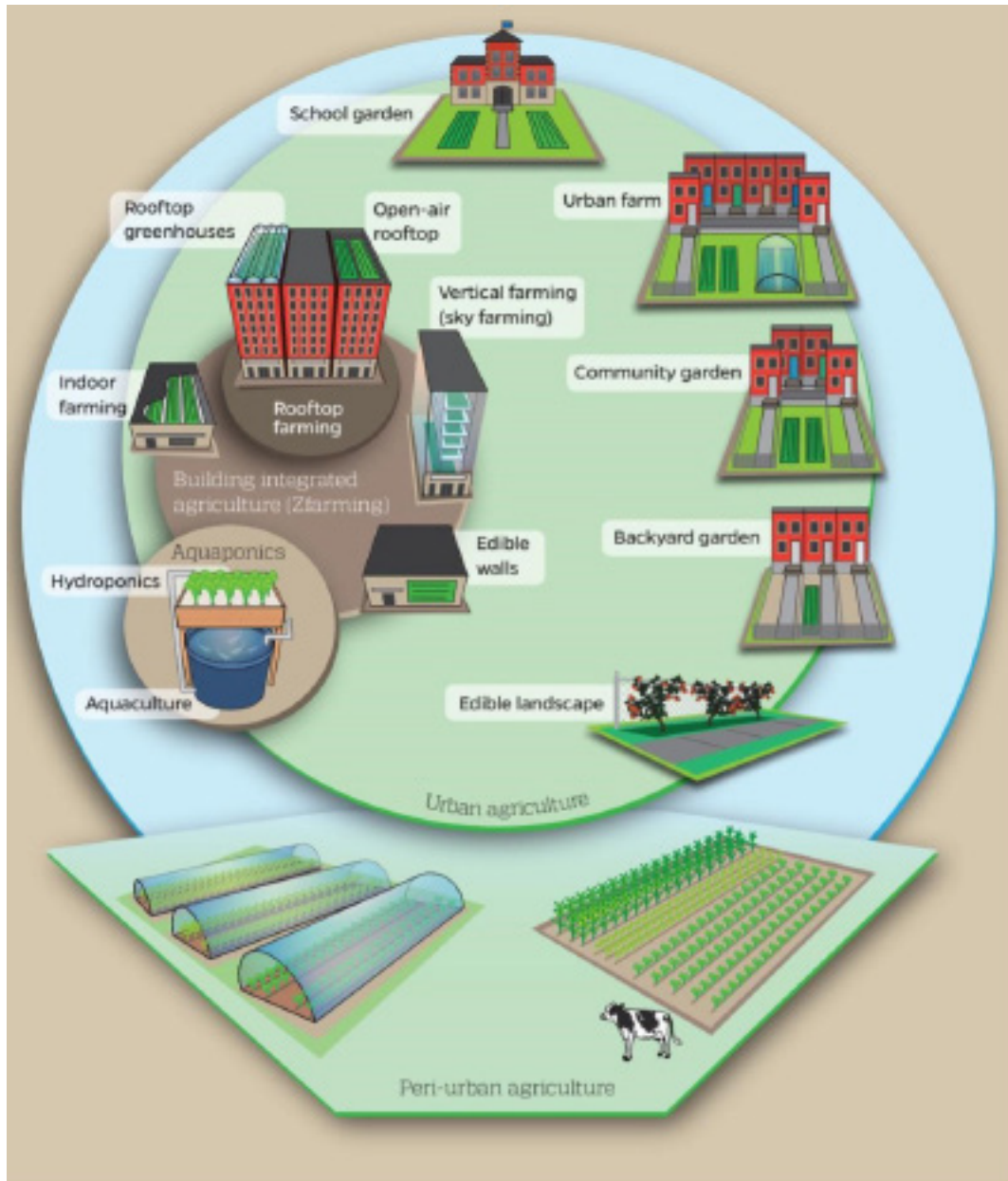


Figure 4: The scope of urban/peri-urban agriculture (UPUA). Source: Santo, Palmer and Kim (2016: 1). as the site is redeveloped into a market garden city. Source: the author.

## 2.2 THE RISE OF URBAN AGRICULTURE

Motivations for engaging in UPUA differ geographically, with a distinction often made between Global North and South (Taguchi and Santini 2019). In the latter, UPUA aims to increase nutritional security, utilizing undeveloped/marginal land and community plots (IRP 2021), and is an important source of household income (De Bon et al. 2010). Whereas in the North, the objective is

frequently to meet the food needs of specific, often underserved groups and/or foster co-benefits. (Orsini et al. 2020). Given this dissertation's focus, the review will largely focus on examples from the North where most research on co-benefits of UPUA has been conducted. Although I present arguments advanced in support of UPUA, I acknowledge that questions and concerns have been articulated (e.g. Goldstein et al. 2016). Advocates emphasise UPUA's multiple benefits, for example highlighting its potential contribution to achieving several Sustainable Development Goals, (Nicholls et al.



2020). Through a different lens, McClintock

(2010) sees UPUA's potential to rectify the ecological dimension of the metabolic rift caused by industrialization but counsels that it is not a panacea.

Globally, IPCC (2019) suggest loss of agricultural land caused by urban expansion can be reduced by increasing urban food production. Furthermore, changing our eating and shopping habits in the UK, as well as farming differently could reduce our carbon footprint and broader environmental impact (UK Health Alliance 2020). According to The Wildlife Trust (2021 n.p.)

'If all our food came from within 20km of where we live, we could save £1.2 billion every year in environmental and congestion costs'. With 82.9% of England's population described as 'urban' (gov.uk 2021), this means sourcing more of our food from urban and peri-urban areas. Covid-19 changed food buying, with more people purchasing from 'good food enterprises' (Sustain 2021). However, this might be a temporary phenomenon, given the pressure on household incomes due to high inflation and low nominal earnings growth (OBR 2022).

UPUA is frequently cited as a way to increase urban ecosystem sustainability and address complex problems, including food security and climate change (Aerts et al. 2016). However, these same authors highlight the lack of quantitative data on UPUA's impact on ecosystem services. Nevertheless, urban sites and green infrastructure can provide important habitat services by establishing vegetatively complex spaces (Lin et al. 2017), especially those that host and boost pollinator populations (Ahrné et al. 2009). They therefore contribute to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in cities as well as improving air quality and water regulation (Lin et al. 2015).

UPUA can be highly productive, particularly where appropriate sustainable approaches are adopted, as Taylor (2020) demonstrated in Rhode Island, USA. Similarly, McDougall et al. (2019), found yields from 13 urban community gardens in New South Wales almost twice those from typical Australian commercial vegetable farms. Nonetheless, the gardens were comparatively inefficient in their use of water, organic matter, and labour. Dorr et

al. (2021) maintain research has yet to determine whether UPUA's environmental impact is lower than conventional farming. However, this may vary considerably given the variety of activities and operations UPUA encompasses. Hence, the FEW Meter study (Caputo et al. 2021) measured the efficiency of UPUA in terms of resource consumption, food production and social benefits across five countries in the Global North, focusing on different typologies in each location. They concluded that 'the environmental impact of urban agriculture can be substantial, and productivity sometimes low. But the social benefits of UA are significant' (Caputo et al. 2022:31).

## 2.3 SOCIO-CULTURAL BENEFITS

Systematic reviews of UPUA research identify a range of socio-cultural benefits to consider alongside food and ecosystem services (Artmann and Sartison 2018, Audate et al. 2019, Ilieva et al. 2022). In particular, Ilieva et al. (2022) usefully suggest a four-fold classification of sociocultural benefits including enhancing social cohesion and engagement; socio-economic benefits and employment opportunities; education benefits; health and well-being benefits. Literature concerning the first three will be explored briefly before concentrating on health and well-being benefits, which are the focus of this dissertation.

### *Enhancing social cohesion and engagement:*

This is the primary thematic focus for studies on the socio-cultural co-benefits of UPUA (Ilieva et al. 2022). Holland (2004), in surveying members of the UK Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens Association, found community-building the primary purpose most frequently identified and food growing secondary. She concluded that community gardens were dynamic organisations with a sense of common purpose which could serve as change agents.

Several studies support Holland's (2004) argument that gardens' participatory and consensusbuilding approach to decision-making, nurtures democratic values and citizen engagement (Glover et al. 2005, Teig et al. 2009). The latter study, based on interviewing community gardeners in Denver,

identified the social processes, including making social connections, reciprocity and development of mutual trust, as contributing to community-building within the gardens and surrounding neighbourhoods.

UPUA also plays a role in integrating marginalized groups including refugees (Abramovic et al. 2019), and older citizens (Li et al. 2010). In several cases UPUA provided the opportunity to share skills and knowledge with the wider community, and across generations (Teig et al. 2009). In Belfast, Corcoran and Kettle (2015:1225) emphasise the uniqueness of allotments in ‘offering a space where people could interact without having to be conscious of or adhere to prescribed ethno-national distinction’. Activism and community empowerment are also seen as significant in several studies, resulting in more engaged citizens and, at times, resulting in wider networked movements and coalitions (Golden 2013; White 2010; Mendes et al. 2008). Nevertheless, potential negative consequences of urban green initiatives, including UPUA, on community cohesion are also cited in the literature, where they lead to neighbourhood gentrification and displacement of low income and minority groups (Rosan 2020).

### ***Socio-economic benefits and employment opportunities***

Regarded by Pölling et al. (2015) as underestimated co-benefits, UPUA creates jobs, can supplement household income through surplus produce sales, and develops skills. For example, Scrubby Hill Farm in Tasmania sees its primary purpose as providing employment and training, including horticultural qualifications (Kingsley et al. 2021). Other urban agricultural initiatives purposely design opportunities for individuals experiencing difficulty engaging in traditional work environments, such as ‘Grow Better’ in Leeds, which promotes well-being by providing a supportive working environment and training for those with long-term mental health difficulties, with proven positive outcomes (Gittins and Morland 2021). In addition, urban farms serve as catalysts for entrepreneurial projects (Bradley and Gault 2014), increase profit margins for other farmers, and provide a more stable and diversified

income stream (NEF 2020).

### ***Education benefits***

Education and training benefits feature in many UPUA case studies. This is central to the 120 UK school farms (School Farm Network n.d.) and more modest school-based initiatives. However, whilst the development of knowledge and skills related to gardening and food growing are noted, 70% of the studies in Ilieva et al.’s (2022) review emphasized the development of important personal qualities and life skills, such as nutritional literacy and management skills, with 10% of studies highlighting positive changes in student engagement. For example, Fifolt et al. (2018) found involvement in school-based urban farming promoted the development of positive relationships, fostered emotional development and increased school connectedness. Similar trends were found by Ruiz-Gallardo et al.’s (2013) study in a Spanish secondary school.

Many educational opportunities and benefits arise directly from UPUA initiatives. For example, participants in the summer youth programme run by Flint Community Garden in Michigan described how it promoted responsibility, hard work and increased their understanding of food and nutrition (Ober Allen et al. 2008). Beyond youth programmes, researchers describe participants in urban agriculture learning more about different modes of food production, sustainability and broader environmental issues (Travaine and Hunold 2010). Also, much of the learning taking place is informal and incidental, and therefore likely to appeal to those wary of formal education.

## **2.4 HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BENEFITS**

Much of the research reporting UPUA’s health and well-being benefits draws evidence from private gardens, allotments, or community gardens, rather than urban farms. For example, Clatworthy et al. (2017:127) interviewed six suburban allotment holders, and found that allotment gardening ‘provided opportunities for the participants to meet

their own personal needs in order to achieve greater well-being' be this from a hedonic perspective, for instance through contact with nature, or eudemonic through continued learning or helping others. On a larger scale, using an online survey, Weber et al. (2015) found overall UK allotment holders reported positive associations with working their allotment. However, quantitative differences in subjective well-being were not statistically significant. In contrast, Mourao et al. (2019:79), using a questionnaire incorporating items to measure personal well-being and subjective happiness, found the 65 allotment holders in northern Portugal to be happy with their lives and optimistic, 'regardless of their economic or social difficulties'. However, there was no comparison made with a control or national population, which supports the rationale for this study.

Beyond self-reported well-being, Soga et al. (2017), analysing 332 Tokyo residents' questionnaires found, having adjusted for socio-demographics and lifestyle factors, on four of their five measures (perceived general health, subjective health complaints, mental health and social cohesion) allotmentees were healthier than non-allotmentees. Body Mass Index (BMI), however, did not differ significantly. A UK study (Dobson et al. 2020), based on thematic analysis of 163 allotmentees' diaries, identified common themes likely to contribute to health and well-being, including high levels of social and community activities e.g. exchanging knowledge, as well as valuing spending time outside and experiencing connectedness with nature. Other studies highlight some allotmentees benefitting particularly: van den Berg et al. (2010:1) found the greatest positive differences in physical and mental health accruing to older allotmentees suggesting that allotments 'may promote active-life styles and contribute to healthy aging'. However, they acknowledge the causality may run the other way.

Other studies focus on health and well-being outcomes associated with collective endeavours and a dynamic more akin to peri/urban farms. Gregis et al. (2021), systematically reviewing evidence of the health benefits of community gardening across a range of geographical locations, found that lowering BMI, increasing fruit and vegetable

intake and physical activity, were the benefits most frequently reported. Less easily quantifiable social and emotional outcomes were less frequently described. Nevertheless, they concluded that 'community gardening may be a viable strategy for well-being promotion in terms of psychological, social, and physical health and may be considered as an innovative urban strategy to promote urban public health' (Gregis et al. 2021:1).

Examining the more easily quantifiable health benefits, Garcia et al's. (2018) review, concluded that community gardens support participants in making healthy food choices, including greater consumption of fruit and vegetables, making these available and accessible. Beyond this review, community gardeners in Denver, Colorado, consumed more fruit and vegetables than home gardeners and non-gardeners, with 56% of the former meeting US government guidelines, compared to 37% of home gardeners and 25% of nongardeners (Litt et al. 2011). Similarly, Nova et al. (2020) found participation in an organic community vegetable garden also induced positive behavioural changes in environmental practices, such as recycling and composting.

In the comparatively few urban farms studies many of the benefits communicated in other typologies are also recorded. Volunteers at Prairie Urban Farm, Alberta, Canada, articulated a range of benefits, including relaxation and happiness (Granzow and Jones 2020). The capacity for urban farms to influence consumption patterns and to try new foods was reported by Colasanti et al. (2012). Dietary changes were found to extend to residents, neighbourhood leaders and the urban farmers in Baltimore, Maryland (Poulson et al.'s 2017). Several American studies investigating programmes where peri/urban farms sell produce directly to schools cite consequential health and well-being benefits. These include changes in students' consumption practices (Harper et al. 2017) and perceptions (Greer et al. 2018), resulting in students valuing good quality local food more highly.

Health and well-being evidence from European urban farms is limited as this is rarely the primary research focus. Nevertheless, Petrescu et al. (2021),

using cost-benefit analysis to evaluate the Parisian R-Urban project, concluded it created diverse forms of value, many unacknowledged by conventional accounting, totaling €3.35 million. Comprising a network of resident-run facilities including AgroCité; a collective urban farm, community kitchen and gardens, benefits included increased well-being partly due to ‘reported feelings of belonging and connection previously unfelt’ (Petrescu et al. 2021:167), and increased capacities as participants learnt new skills and obtained paid employment. This case study, however, highlights the precarity of such projects: AgroCité closed in 2016, the urban farm being turned into a car park.

In all settings the literature emphasises the positive health and well-being benefits associated with urban food growing. Occasionally, disbenefits are mentioned. For example, Dobson et al. (2020) mention allotmenters’ comments about backache induced by working their plots. Similarly, Brown and Jameton (2000) noted the need to understand the risks and prevalence of injury in urban agricultural enterprises. However, Lampert et al.’s (2021) systematic review of research on community gardening asked: ‘Does community gardening provoke any discomfort in terms of physical health, i.e., bodily pain, to their beneficiaries?’ but no studies addressing this. Hence, they recommended this question be incorporated into future research, which I will do. Some researchers note the potential dangers to growers and consumers associated with urban agriculture due to soil and water contamination, often arising from a previous land use. This has received more attention in the Global South, for example in Arimiyaw et al.’s (2020) research on urban vegetable farming in Kumasi, Ghana, although land contamination was also highlighted by Beavers et al. (2020) in their Detroit study.

## **2.5 HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH VOLUNTEERING PER SE**

As this dissertation explores benefits which may

accrue to urban farm volunteers, it is important to understand benefits experienced by volunteers in other contexts. Volunteering i.e. giving time freely to participate in activities to benefit others, be it an individual group or organization (Wilson 2000), has been found to be predictive of better well-being i.e. higher self-reported life satisfaction (Thoits and Hewitt 2001), and happiness scores (Borgonovi 2008), lower incidence of depressive symptoms (Kim and Pai 2010) and psychological distress (Greenfield and Marks 2004), as well as better physical health (Ayalon 2008). A large-scale longitudinal UK study found an association between volunteering and well-being from mid-adulthood onwards (Tabassum et al. 2016) and Jiang et al. (2018) found a longer volunteering commitment associated with a greater increase in life satisfaction. Many of the health benefits are attributed to the pro-social, meaning-making nature of volunteering and the extension of social networks (Stukas et al. 2016). However, not all volunteering opportunities are equal; Yeung et al. (2017) found that ‘other-oriented’ volunteering (showing concern and care for others) had better health benefits than ‘self-volunteering’ (where reciprocity for the volunteer comprises self-actualization and development).

Despite interest in UPUA, little research has focused on volunteering in this context (Tiraieyi et al. 2019). However, O’Brien et al. (2010), following interviews with environmental volunteers in the UK, identified ways in which outdoor volunteering may contribute to an individual’s overall sense of well-being (Figure 5). In their earlier paper (O’Brien et al. 2008) incorporated a spiritual dimension, including awe, beauty and wonder. Taken together, these provide a useful starting point for exploring the health and well-being benefits accruing to volunteers on urban farms.

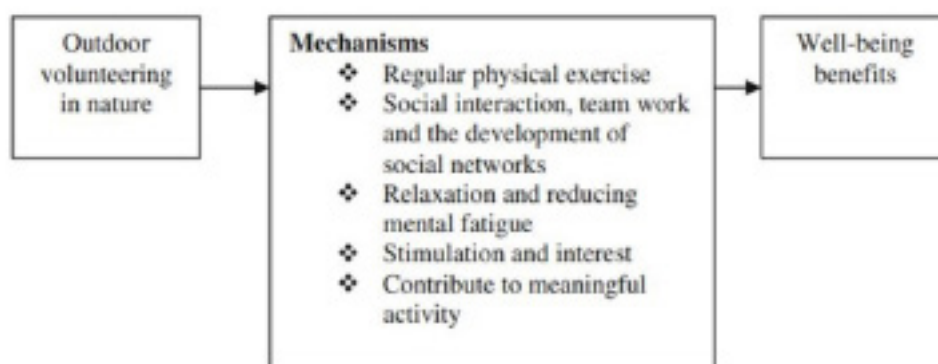


Figure 5: Potential ways in which outdoor volunteering impacts volunteers' health and well-being.  
 Source: O'Brien et al. (2010 p.531).

## 2.6 RESEARCH GAPS AND WHY THIS STUDY IS IMPORTANT

Whilst the papers cited here provide evidence of positive health and well-being outcomes arising from participation in UPUA, it is apparent that relatively little research has focused on any health and well-being benefits attributable to public engagement in urban or peri-urban farms compared to that conducted in home or community gardens and allotments. Still less research has been sited in the UK. Hence, this study sets out to contribute to addressing these gaps. One clear gap is the adoption of a reliable standardized way of assessing well-being which enables comparison to a large, representative data set at national level. Therefore, this study will incorporate the ONS4 well-being questions and other UK standardized measures explained further in the methodology. Furthermore, by employing a mixed methods approach and at two locations, this study also seeks to overcome many of the perceived weaknesses in other research, where one site and approach have been used, and in so doing capture a more comprehensive insight into volunteers' experiences.

# 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 CASE STUDY SELECTION

LWA identified suitable sites for this research, arranging introductions. SCF and Wolves Lane were chosen as case studies because both rely significantly on volunteers and provide an excellent contrast regarding location: SCF being peri-urban and Wolves Lane sited in densely populated north London. Moreover, the facilities and business models differ: SCF operates as a single entity from its seven-acre site, producing and buying-in produce for their well-established online farm shop and vegbox scheme. In contrast, Wolves Lane hosts distinct, independent commercial and community enterprises supplying vegbox schemes, restaurants, and community food projects. Both sites sell produce commercially, have a social mission and are an important community resource.

## 3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

With existing research over-reliant on one approach and research instrument (Ilieva et al. 2022), I employ an exploratory mixed methods approach. Advocated by Plano Clark and Ivankova (2016), this is well-suited to enabling a better understanding of complex issues in the social sphere, by integrating quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis.

The ONS well-being framework (Figure 1) informed the design of the research instruments. Hence, the ONS4 subjective well-being questions (Hicks et al. 2013) were incorporated into the questionnaire, enabling comparison of volunteers' subjective well-being with local and national well-being data. Each question focuses on a different aspect of well-being, as explained previously.

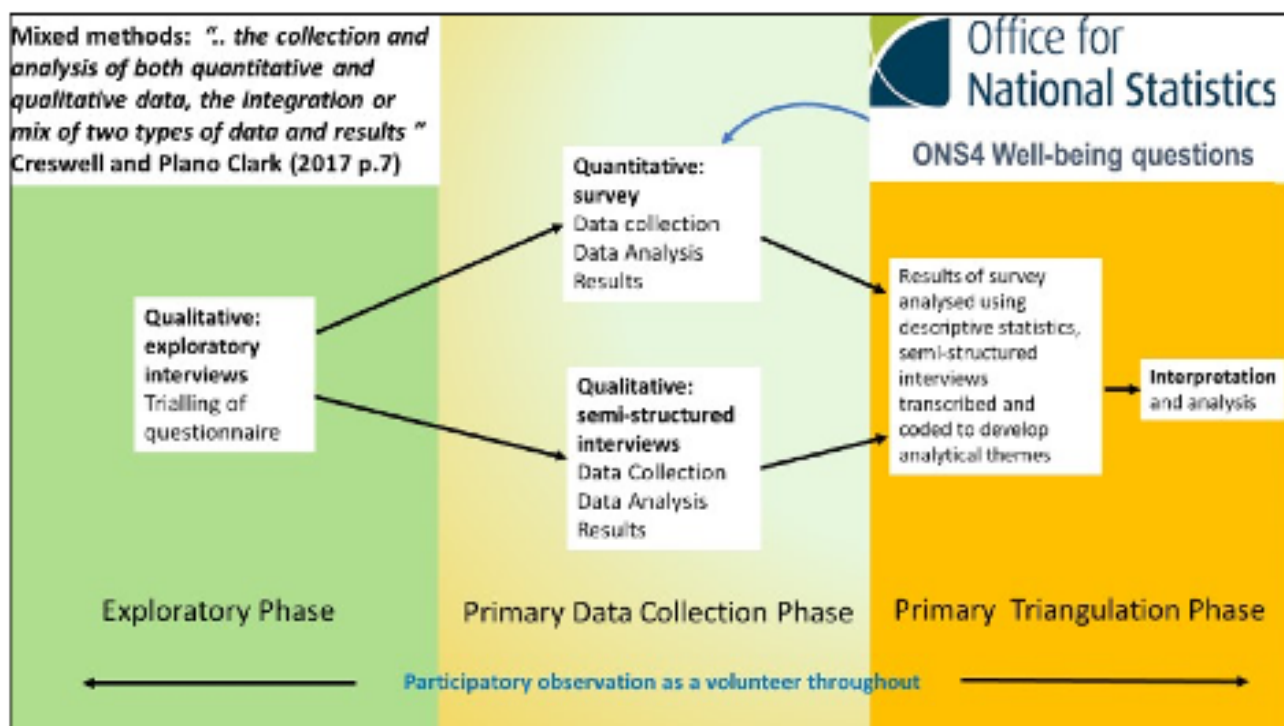


Figure 6: Procedural diagram of the exploratory mixed methods research design used in this study. Adapted from Creswell and Plano Clark (2018).



### ***Exploratory phase: participant observation and initial interviews***

The exploratory phase was used to gain a greater understanding of how each farm operated, identify important themes and develop the questionnaire and semi-structured interview questions. From the outset, I was a participant observer at both research sites. This role was undertaken ethically. Members of staff and volunteers were aware of my dual role as researcher/volunteer and participant information sheets (Appendix 3) and consent forms (Appendix 4) were used to ensure this. As a volunteer, I completed induction training at each location, volunteered regularly, attended socials and helped at special events. Hence, I was able to build a rapport with volunteers, growers and other staff. Moreover, I developed a 'tacit understanding' (DeWalt 2010:12) of the volunteer experience which would have otherwise eluded me, and which contributed significantly to data interpretation. I recorded my volunteer experience in a journal, written on my journeys home. The journal recorded events, observations, questions and problems to be resolved. It was an invaluable aide-memoire, guide to further action and enquiry and stimulated reflective thinking about the research.

Exploratory interviews were conducted to ascertain an understanding of volunteers' motivations, experiences and any perceived health and well-being benefits in a thorough and systematic manner. This facilitated development of a questionnaire which would be culturally specific, include items relating to any previously unresearched variables emerging, establish whether themes and questions from existing research resonated with volunteers, and pilot items. Latterly, the exploratory interviews were also used to formulate and trial questions used in the in-depth semi-structured interviews.

### ***The research design (Figure 6) comprised three***

### ***phases explored below.***

The questionnaire (Appendix 5) was designed in accordance with the logical steps set out by Gideon (2012) and informed by the exploratory interviews which, for example, led to the inclusion of a question about access to outside space at home. Also, my observations confirmed that Covid-19 had changed the volunteer experience at both sites considerably, and it was a complicated picture worth exploring in the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Some questions from the volunteer surveys previously conducted at SCF were incorporated<sup>2</sup>. The questionnaire also included items taken from relevant government surveys facilitating comparison to existing data sets. These items have been tested, validated and proved to be reliable. This was crucial in the case of ascertaining volunteers' subjective well-being. Hence, the following ONS4 questions were adopted:

Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays? (evaluative)

Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile? (eudemonic)

Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday? (experience - positive affect)

Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? (experience - negative affect)

Other questions targeted factors influencing individuals' well-being, including personal finance/income (Figure 1). Feedback was sought from volunteers and management at both sites, LWA and my supervisor regarding this sensitive topic. Having trialed various options, notwithstanding its limitations and moral overtone some might perceive (Laughton 2022), a proxy question was chosen: 'At the end of each month, do you have enough disposable income to live a 'good life?'. The inclusion of

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<sup>2</sup> Although ideally the scale on these questions would have been from 0 (no change) to 10 (or 0-5), the original scales (i.e. 1 to 10 or 0-5) were retained in order to facilitate SCF making comparison with the data being collected in this study and the data they hold.

opened-ended questions allowed respondents to provide more detailed answers and explanations. The questionnaires were discussed and refined with key members of staff at each site, and trialed to determine whether further adjustments were necessary, prior to going live. This identified that a comprehensive ethnicity question, as used in the 2021 England and Wales census, was required.

### *In-depth semi-structured interviews*

Including semi-structured interviews reflected their flexibility around a common core of questions (Appendix 6), enabling wider discussion of pertinent issues, and the opportunity for participants to offer new meanings (Galletta and Cross 2013). Having explored sensory ethnography (Pink 2009) and participant photography (photo journals), these were rejected due to time constraints and ethical concerns. However, using photography and objects as material mnemonics, i.e. images or objects assisting recollection of memories, became central to in-depth interviewing, promoting rich discussions about volunteers' perceptions. For example, an olive tree at Wolves Lane, prompted one interviewee, Sean, to recall its abundant harvest following a hot summer. However, he also saw this as an indicator of climate change although, retrospectively, he felt grateful to have had that early warning of impending change. In addition, inspired by the work of Schwarz (2017) on volunteer-tourism, I incorporated her strategy of asking broad questions about the volunteers' most vivid or meaningful moments arising from volunteering.

A purposive sample of 6 interviewees from SCF and 5 from Wolves Lane was chosen to ensure volunteers from different activities or groups were represented. As the timing of these in-depth interviews overlapped with the surveys, responses to the latter were used to inform the former, as per phase 2 of the research design (Figure 6). Six interviews were conducted in-person and 5 via Zoom for expediency. Nevertheless, making the photographic record took place on site.

## 3.3 DATA HANDLING AND PROCESSING

Survey data was cleaned, removing responses from outside target populations or duplicates. Responses to open-ended questions were subjected to thematic analysis, reflecting the treatment of interview transcripts detailed below. Codes I used in a previous well-being study provided a basis for developing codes here, supplemented by sub-themes identified by Ilieva et al. (2022).

In-person exploratory and in-depth interviews were audio recorded with interviewees' permission. In two cases, detailed notes were taken and transcribed. Zoom interviews were recorded, audio-transcripts obtained and subsequently corrected (Appendix 7). Transcripts from interviews were anonymized where requested. All transcripts were re-read to ensure familiarity with the contents prior to coding. Two interviews were recoded blind three days after initial coding to check for consistency.

The participant observation journal (POJ) was re-read and consulted frequently. Recurring themes emerged giving insights into SCF and Wolves Lane volunteers' motivations and opinions. These are discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

## 3.4 LIMITATIONS OF CHOSEN RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An online survey disadvantages those without access to internet enabled devices. Mitigations included making hardcopies available. Nevertheless, since respondents were self-selecting, selection bias may result in the survey not being representative of the volunteer cohorts.

Socially desirable responding (Paulhus 1991) might feature, whereby participants over or under report behaviours, e.g. the consumption of fruit and vegetables, to present themselves favourably.

Comparing self-reported well-being scores with



ONS data sets is a good idea. However, there is a time lag publishing this data, particularly the detailed breakdown according to geographical location, age and gender. This is unfortunate as mean well-being scores do vary across the country and according to demographic factors. For example, Greater London's mean well-being scores tend to be lower than the mean for England and there are significant variations between and within London boroughs (GLA 2019). I could compare the volunteers' ONS4 responses with contemporaneous national data, London data from 2021 and individual borough data from 2020/21.

Furthermore, practicalities restricted research to two sites in Greater London, and the findings therefore may not reflect the circumstances at urban /peri-urban farms elsewhere.

# 4. CASE STUDY 1: SUTTON COMMUNITY FARM



Figure 7: Aerial view of the Sutton Community Farm site covering 7.1 acres. Source: Google Earth.

## 4.1 RESEARCH AND SOURCES EMPLOYED

Three exploratory interviews were conducted, 7 volunteer shifts worked, 3 community lunches and a volunteer party were attended, prior to the online survey going live. I also attended SCF's Annual General Meeting and volunteering continued throughout the remainder of the research period. This all provided information for my POJ. The survey, yielding 44 responses, was promoted via emails from SCF management which contained a link to the information sheet with a hyperlink and

QR code for the survey. An alert was also posted on the on-line volunteer portal. Posters were put up in the farm's refreshment shed, information slips were distributed to volunteers, and word-of-mouth was used to further increase participation.

Analysis of volunteering opportunities and participation over a 10-week period (18/04/22-24/06/22), together with participant observation data, determined those approached for in-depth interviews (Table 1).

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Volunteer for...</b>
Interviewee 1	Female	Over 3 years
Interviewee 2	Female	1-3 years
Interviewee 3	Female	Over 3 years
Interviewee 4	Male	1-3 years
Interviewee 5	Male	Over 3 years
Interviewee 6	Female	Less than 1 year

Table 1: Profile of Sutton Community Farm volunteers participating in the semi-structured in-depth interviews. Information disclosed here is minimal to preserve the anonymity of interviewees.

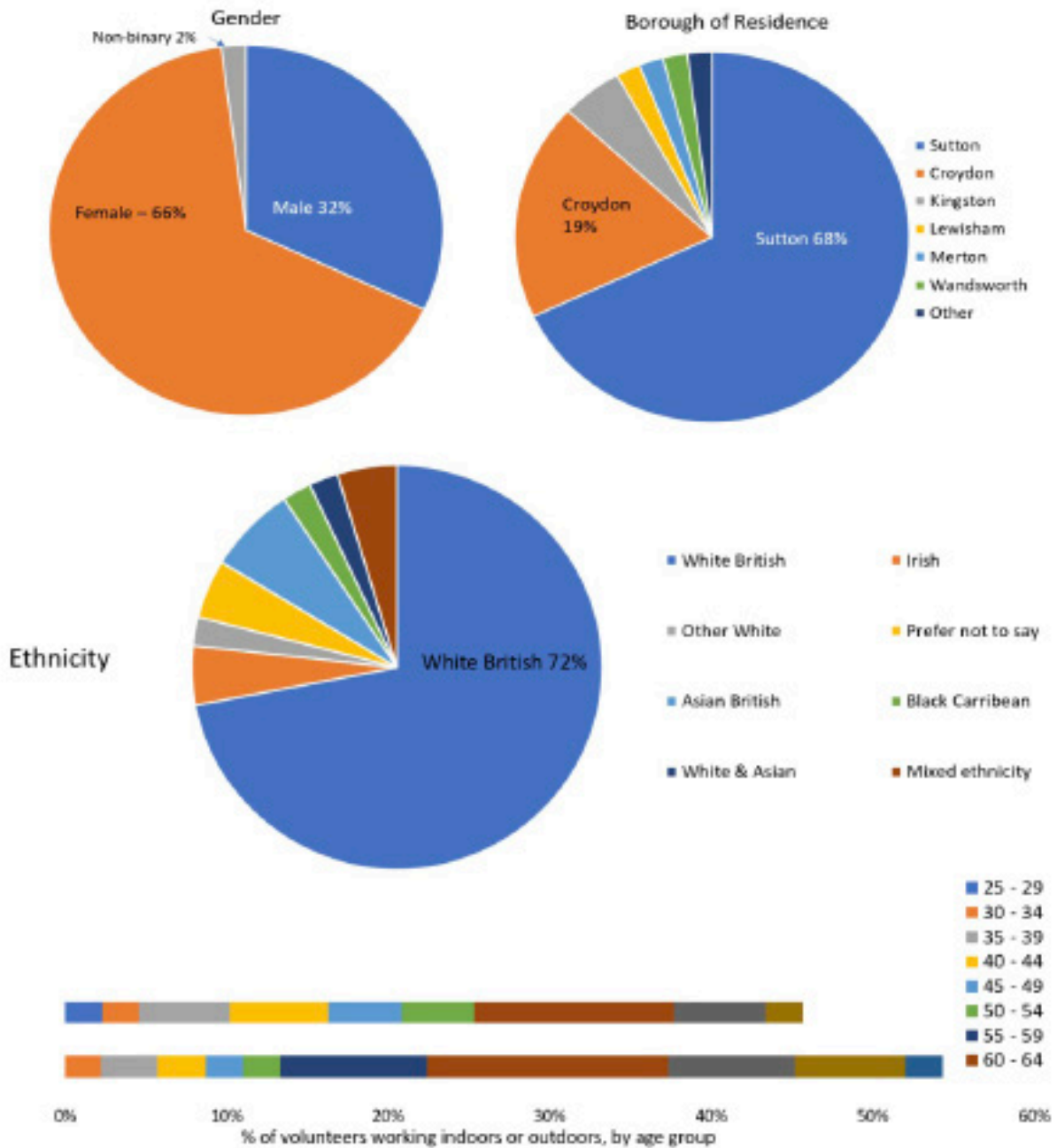


Figure 8: Profile of respondents to the Sutton Community Farm survey.

Dimension	Survey Percentage
Response rate	24.4%
Age	68% over 50
Education	75% graduates
Main activity	Retired 36.4%, working part-time 22.8%
Sufficient income too live a 'good life'	71%
Access to private outdoor space	95.5%, private garden 81.1%
Length of volunteering at SCF	38.6% > 3 years, 25% 1-3 years
Frequency of volunteering	61.4% at least once per week

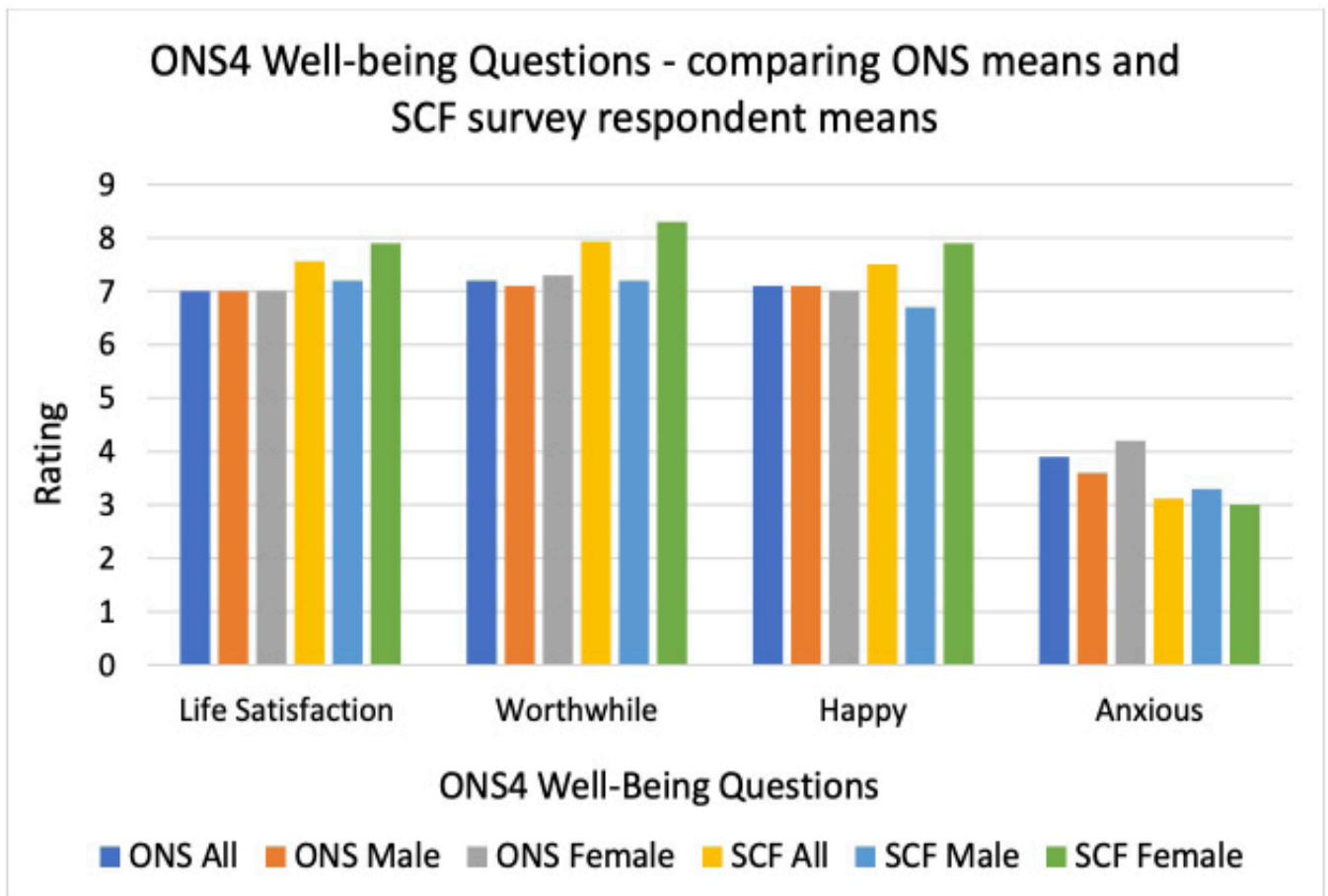
Table 2: SCF survey: other key facts.

## 4.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

SCF survey respondents (Figure 8 and Table 2) broadly represent the volunteer cohort, although there was a particularly high response rate (59.5%) from vegbox packing, where regular crews have a particularly strong esprit de corps (POJ 28/07/22). Nevertheless, important variations in responses are identified in figure 8.

SCF volunteers' mean scores on all ONS4 personal

well-being questions are better than the national (Figure 9), regional and local populations' (Appendix 8). When adjusted for gender, to reflect the high proportion of female volunteers at SCF, weighted means are also higher than the national average. However, none of these results is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Differences are apparent within the data, with females working indoors, exclusively in the vegbox operation, having noticeably better ONS4 scores than females volunteering outdoors (Appendix 8).



### Physical and mental health

Regarding other aspects of health and well-being (Figure 10), 56.8% of survey respondents rated their improvement since they began volunteering at SCF as high (4-5 on a 1-5 scale). The percentage of respondents reporting improvements in physical fitness and mental health of 4 or more was similar at 52.3% and 50% respectively. It was apparent that both crop production and packhouse shifts could provide beneficial physical workouts which several volunteers compared to gym sessions, and for this volunteer below may have contributed to reducing her blood pressure to within the normal range:

*'...particularly for the crop production side...the physical aspect of it... the being outdoors there's*

*a feeling like I've had a productive morning and I've...gotten [my] heart pumping a little bit and done something.'* (SCF interviewee)

Volunteers citing mental health benefits were equally clear in identifying aspects of their SCF experience contributing to this:

*'It immediately lifts me into an optimistic and positive frame of mind, being surrounded by likeminded people in the natural environment!'* (SCF survey respondent)

*'Overall, it's de-stressed me...I find it a real sort of departure away from... - a proper recharge or reset away from sort of day-to-day, probably more than anywhere else really.'* (SCF interviewee)

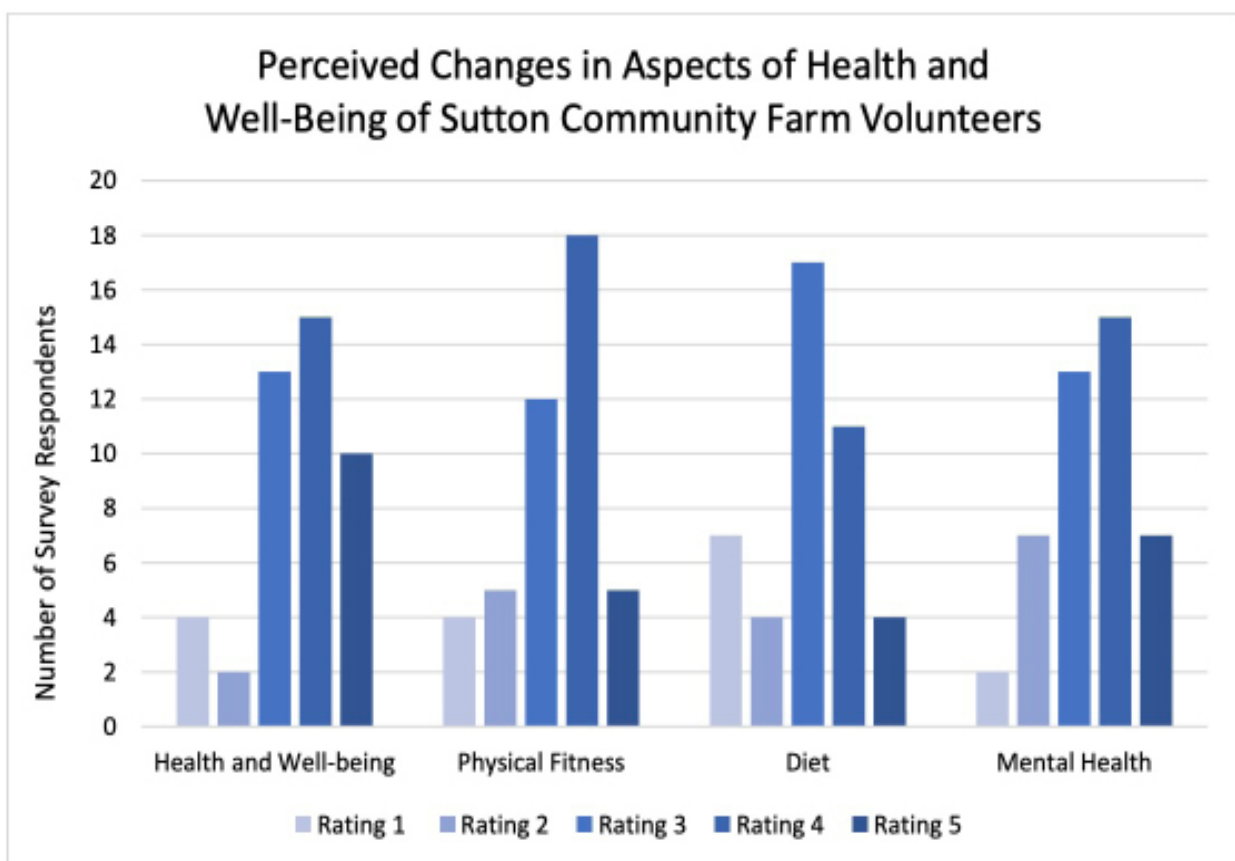


Figure 10: Perceived improvements in aspects of health and well-being of the 44 SCF volunteers responding to the survey. Ratings of 1-2 are categorized as little improvement, 3 moderate and 4-5 a high degree of positive change.



## Nutritional health

SCF volunteers' nutritional health is probably higher than the general population's. 62.5% of survey respondents met the recommendations for daily consumption of 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables, compared to 28% of UK adults (NHS 2020). Although demographic factors (e.g. gender, income, education) will account for some of this difference, the 'Elf Shelf', where surplus produce is freely available to volunteers, also contributes, with 34.9% of survey participants giving a rating of 7 or more (on a 1-10 scale) to the question 'How important is any produce you bring home from the Elf Shelf in ensuring you and your family eat sufficient fresh produce?'. Interviewees also explained the Elf Shelf was one way they might try unfamiliar vegetables or cook something different:

*'If I go to the Elf Shelf....it's probably stuff I would never pick up in the supermarket,...I will think of something to make from these. A couple of weeks ago, I had like a butternut squash and carrots or something and I thought OK I'm going to make soup. Whereas, if I'm stood in the supermarket I wouldn't think I'm going to make soup - I would never do that....I make a conscious effort to come up with dishes based on what I have.'* (SCF interviewee)

The food cooked at SCF events, community lunches (80% of survey respondents had attended these), recipes on the SCF website (used by 56.7% of survey respondents), and other volunteers, were also acknowledged as sources of information and inspiration about food.

For some, volunteering on the farm has transformed their diets as Jo, one of the 36.4% of survey respondents subscribing to the vegbox scheme, illustrated:

*'I was very much the salad has lettuce and maybe tomatoes whereas now, it's shorter to list what's not in the salad...My health from all this is much better.'*

## Ethos

The farm's agroecological approach and its focus on community are important to volunteers, with 72.7% citing giving time to a worthwhile project as a reason for volunteering here:

*'I like the ethos of the farm and the fact it's a community enterprise. So,...I'm helping something that kind of benefits the local community.'* (SCF survey respondent)

*'I've said to friends, I said to people, you know, I love the feeling and the ethos of it so much I'd work there.'* (SCF interviewee)

## Education and skills

Although only 6% of survey respondents identified developing new skills and knowledge as a reason for volunteering at SCF, it is clear volunteers appreciate learning more about food generally, with 72.7% of survey respondents giving a high rating (4-5) when asked whether they have an increased understanding of food sustainability and seasonality. Also, in choosing an object or place on the farm important to the health and well-being of others, one interviewee chose the recently established orchard where volunteers will learn new techniques. Furthermore, 64% of survey respondents cited examples of knowledge and skills they were pleased to acquire through volunteering including these:

*'Caring for the soil and growing food without chemicals for fertilizer or pest control. No dig method.'*

*'Better awareness of food production generally, organic principles and working with nature. Vegetarian recipe options.'*

*'I'm particularly happy to find out about vegetables I didn't know much about.'*

## Connection and belonging

93.2% of survey respondents recorded a high score (8 or more on a 1-10 scale) when asked whether they feel valued at SCF and 94.8% gave a high score regarding recommending volunteering at SCF to

friends or family.

SCF is a place where social connections are made (Figure 11), as volunteers meet new people (77.3% of survey respondents rated this as high), make friends (high rating from 46.5% of respondents) and feel part of the farm community (high rating from 84.1%). This is also supported by these illustrative comments:

*'It's a bit like 'Cheers', you know, where everyone knows your name.'* (SCF interviewee)

*'I guess I describe it as a nice way to meet different people that maybe I wouldn't come into contact within my normal life probably ever.'* (SCF

interviewee)

When asked to identify something on the farm interviewees thought important for the health and well-being of volunteers 4 of the 6 chose the picnic tables outside the farm office (Figure 12) or the 'tea shack' where volunteers gather and socialise, as explained below:

*'This little space, where we have lunch, that's very special – where we play games ...at events and sing Christmas carols round the fire.'* (Jo, SCF interviewee)

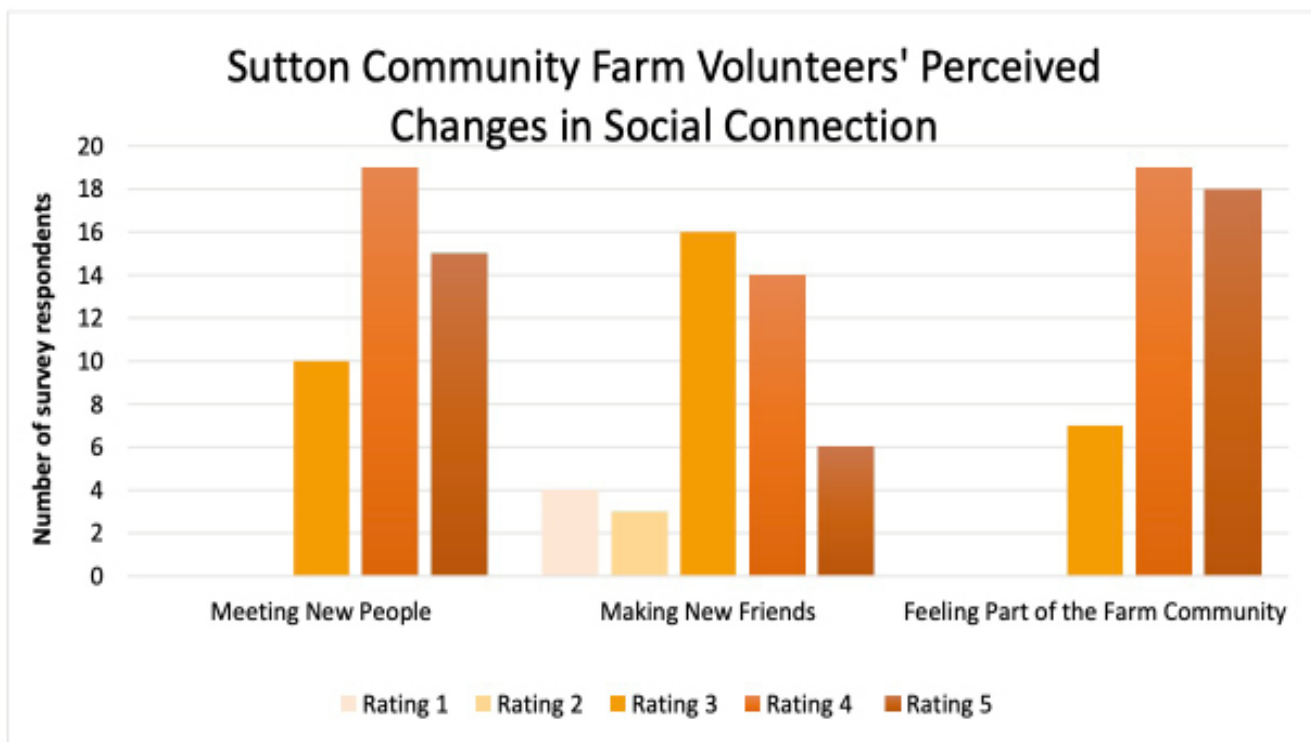


Figure 11: SCF volunteer survey respondents' ratings of changes in their social connections since they started volunteering at the farm. A rating of 4 or more is categorized as 'high'.



*Figure 12: Four interviewees chose this space where volunteers socialise as something on the farm that was important to the health and well-being of other volunteers.*

### **Contact with nature**

Being outdoors and in contact with nature is valued highly by many volunteers and for some the benefits start before stepping onto the farm, as for this volunteer describing what they enjoy most about volunteering at SCF:

*‘Feeling of well-being walking along Telegraph Track with the birds singing in the hedgerow as I walk to the farm in the early morning.’ (SCF survey respondent)*

One of the interviewees chose the space just inside the farm entrance as a favourite space because she feels able to decompress immediately she walks on to the site. Observing seasons change and plants growing was also identified by volunteers

as a source of pleasure. Four of the 6 interviewees regarded the most naturalistic parts of the farm as being particularly important to them (Figure 13).

### **Impacts of Covid-19**

Survey and interview responses about Covid highlighted the profound effect the pandemic had on those volunteering at that time, often bringing about a re-evaluation and heightened appreciation of the farm’s work and the benefits individuals derive from volunteering at SCF. This is explored in detail in a separate paper (Jackman 2023).

### **Disbenefits**

Very few disbenefits relating to health and well-being were identified by volunteers. Where muscle



aches were mentioned it was always framed in a positive way as here:

*'Anything negative that I've experienced from having a bit of a sore back sometimes after heavy days labouring in the field. And then....I wouldn't consider that to be a negative because....I'm using muscles and doing things that I wouldn't be doing ordinarily which...is good for me.'* (SCF interviewee)

### 4.3 SUMMARY

Overwhelmingly the volunteers were very positive about their experiences at SCF, citing multiple benefits. When asked to distil their experiences into three words, four themes emerged: feelings

of happiness, enjoyment but above all fun (fun or its synonyms was mentioned by 68% of survey respondents); making a positive contribution; the friendliness of the farm community and individuals, and finally the health benefits. Although the volunteers' wellbeing scores, on average, are higher than national means, when adjusted for gender, the differences are not statistically significant. Nevertheless, the volunteers regard their participation in the farm's activities as beneficial regarding their physical, mental and nutritional health. SCF plays an important role in extending volunteers' social networks, the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and enabling participants to contribute to a worthwhile project.



*Figure 13: Naturalistic areas are important for wildlife but also volunteers. Although one of the interviewees rarely spends time by this pond it is a place of importance and a source of pleasure when thinking about the farm.*

# 5. CASE STUDY 2: THE WOLVES LANE CENTRE



Figure 14: Wolves Lane Centre covers 3.6 acres, comprising glasshouses and outside growing beds. A second site, Pasteur Gardens, 2.4 miles away, provides additional outdoor growing space.

## 5.1 RESEARCH CONDUCTED AND SOURCES EMPLOYED

Three exploratory interviews were conducted and 5 volunteer shifts worked prior to the online survey going live. The survey, attracting 35 responses, was

promoted via three volunteer WhatsApp groups, posters on site and word-of-mouth. My experience as a participant observer throughout the research period and contacts made via the growers at Wolves Lane determined those approached for interview (Table 3).

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Volunteer for...</b>
Interviewee A	Female	Over 3 years
Interviewee B	Female	1-6 months
Interviewee C	Male	Over 3 years
Interviewee D	Female	1-3 years
Interviewee E	Female	1-3 years

Table 3: Profile of Wolves Lane volunteers participating in the semi-structured in-depth interviews. Information disclosed here is minimal to preserve the anonymity of interviewees.

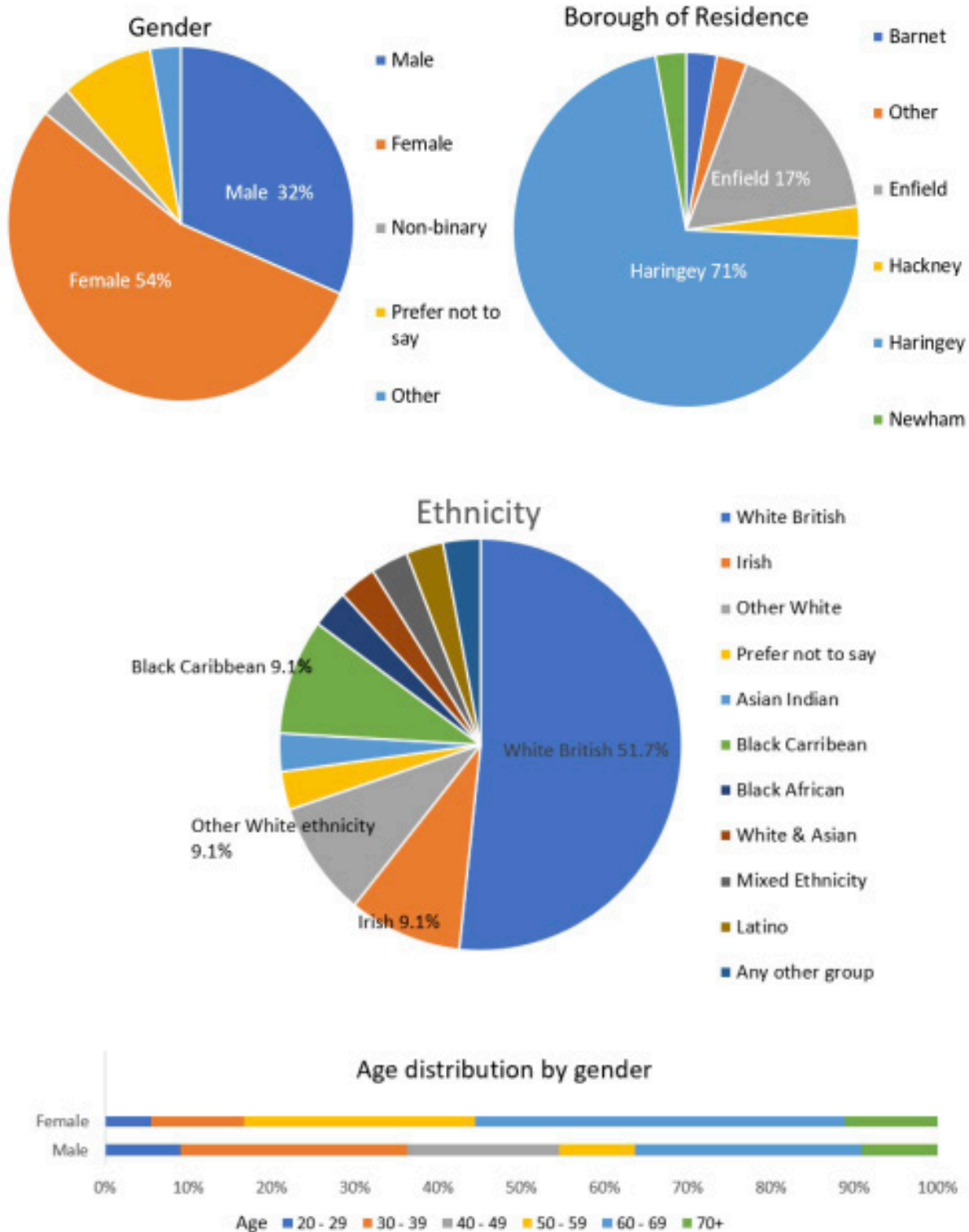


Table 3: Profile of Wolves Lane volunteers participating in the semi-structured in-depth interviews. Information disclosed here is minimal to preserve the anonymity of interviewees.



Dimension	Survey Percentage
Age	69% over 50
Education	76% graduates
Main activity	Retired 39.5%, working part-time 30.4%
Sufficient income too live a 'good life'	68%
Access to private outdoor space	91.2%, private garden 76.5%
Length of volunteering at Wolves Lane	22.9% > 3 years, 45.7% 1-3 years
Frequency of volunteering	80% at least once per week

**Table 3: Profile of Wolves Lane volunteers participating in the semi-structured in-depth interviews. Information disclosed here is minimal to preserve the anonymity of interviewees.**

## 5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

It is difficult to determine the response rate and to what extent the profile of survey respondents (Figure 15 and Table 4) was representative of Wolves Lane volunteers. This information is not held centrally for all groups. However, the response was high amongst regular volunteers from most groups but less so from others, as discussed in the next chapter.

### **Well-being**

The overall mean ONS4 well-being scores (Appendix 9 and Figure 16) indicate that Wolves Lane volunteers feel more satisfied with life, consider it more worthwhile, are happier and less anxious than the national population on average. This is also true when the means for males and females are compared with national and local data. The Wolves Lane weighted means, reflecting the high proportion of female volunteers, are better than the ONS national upper confidence level for all 4 questions. However, as with SCF, none of these results is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (due to the variability of well-being scores amongst the cohort, giving rise to very wide confidence limits). Within the volunteer cohort differences are apparent (Appendix 9) and it is notable that the ONS4 means for males are particularly positive.

### **Physical and mental health**

On a 5-point scale, 56.2 % of Wolves Lane survey

respondents gave a high rating (4-5) when asked whether they thought their health and well-being had improved since volunteering at Wolves Lane (Figure 17). They perceive this volunteering as enhancing their physical fitness (43.7% gave a high rating) and mental health, (53.7% rated this as 4 or higher). The findings are supported by comments like these:

*'I get properly tired. Even though it's not strenuous work it is consistent....[At Wolves Lane] I spend more time in my body than in my head, which is good for me.'* (WL interviewee) *'The people and the environment means you can show up and have a really social few hours or you can show up and keep to yourself and do different tasks all depending on your mood. I have never gone to volunteering and not left in a better mood than I arrived.'* (WL survey respondent)

### **Nutritional health**

As at SCF, the nutritional health of Wolves Lane volunteers is likely to be higher than the general population's, with 59.5% of survey respondents meeting the recommendations for daily consumption of 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetable i.e. 31.5 percentage points higher than the general UK population (NHS 2020). 31.3% of survey respondents subscribe to a vegbox/bag scheme, and although it is not possible to make causal linkages, 37.5% of volunteers scored 4 or more (on a 1-5 scale) when asked to gauge whether their diets had improved since they started volunteering at Wolves Lane, and 34.4% gave a high rating (4-5) when asked to assess

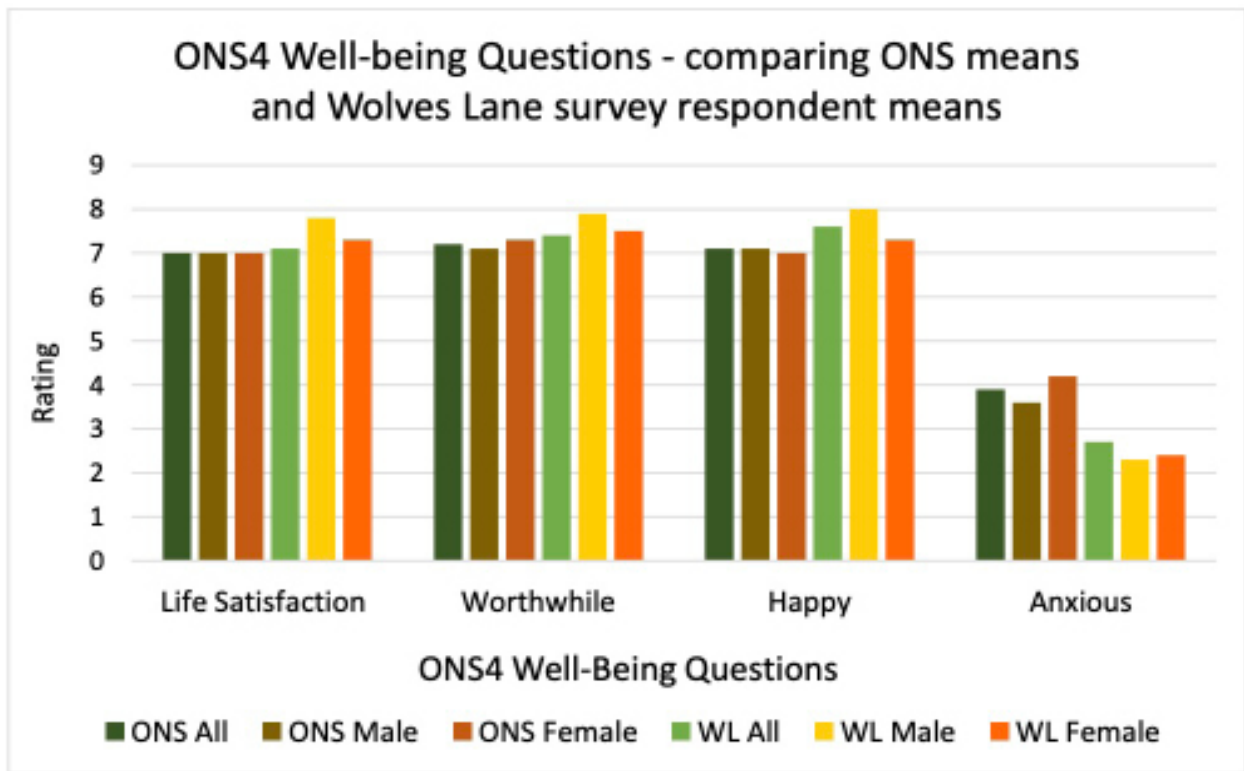


Figure 16: ONS4 means for Wolves Lane Volunteers compared to national means.

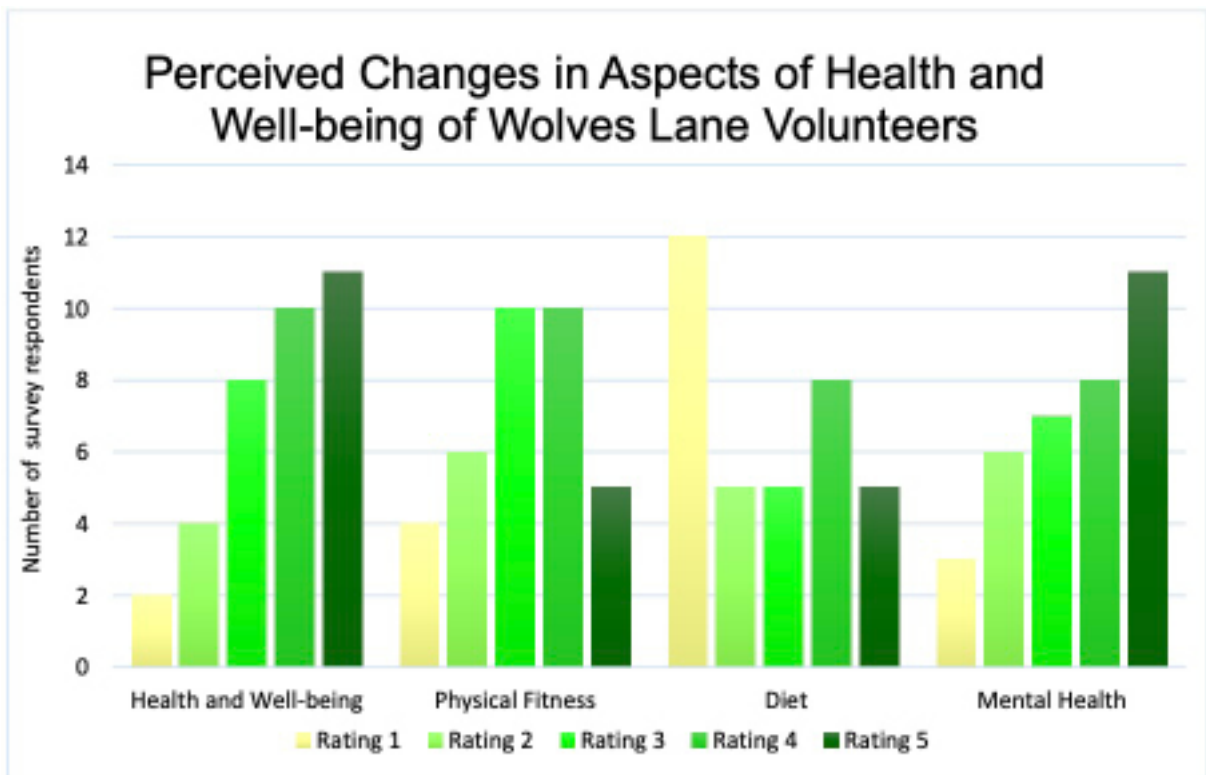


Figure 17: Perceived improvements in aspects of health and well-being of 35 Wolves Lane volunteers responding to the survey. Ratings of 1-2 are categorized as little improvement, 3 moderate and 4-5 a high degree of positive change.

if they had increased fruit and vegetable growing at home. The Wolves Lane lunches provided for volunteers are always vegetarian (Figure 18b) and are cited as an inspiration for home cooking and trying different foods, for example, cucamelons (POJ 28/06/22).

### Connection and belonging

Whilst 'fun' and its synonyms are the most commonly given words when summing up the Wolves Lane volunteering experience, this does not dominate the responses. What is notable is the range of descriptors generated by the volunteers with friendliness, community and learning given equal billing, highlighting important themes reflected in interviews.

Positive interactions with others are central to the enjoyment participants derive from volunteering at Wolves Lane, with 78.7% citing people and the farm community as the most enjoyable aspect of their volunteering experience. Figure 19 shows 85.7% of survey respondents giving a high rating

(4-5) regarding opportunities afforded to meet new people and 60% for making new friends. Volunteers particularly appreciate meeting people with different life experiences. The common interest (as well as the regularity of the encounters) facilitates social interactions:

*'all the people are just the sort of people you get on with straight away...they have a similar ethos and values.'* (Wolves Lane interviewee)

For some, volunteering here has fostered a strong group identity and facilitated the development of important friendships which extend beyond the farm, as evidenced in the comment below:

*'We have this name for it [a volunteer group] it's Lettuce Club [Figure 20] and...people definitely help each other outside of volunteering. If I need any help or....there's a celebration say, like the birthday you saw.... it's more than just the volunteering sessions.'* (Wolves Lane interviewee)

The sense of community at Wolves Lane, its



Figure 18: Three examples of aspects of Wolves Lane interviewees identified as important to the health and wellbeing of other volunteers a) the cactus garden b) food prepared for the meal project and the free lunch available to volunteers c) herbs and other plants grown by volunteers to sell to the local community.

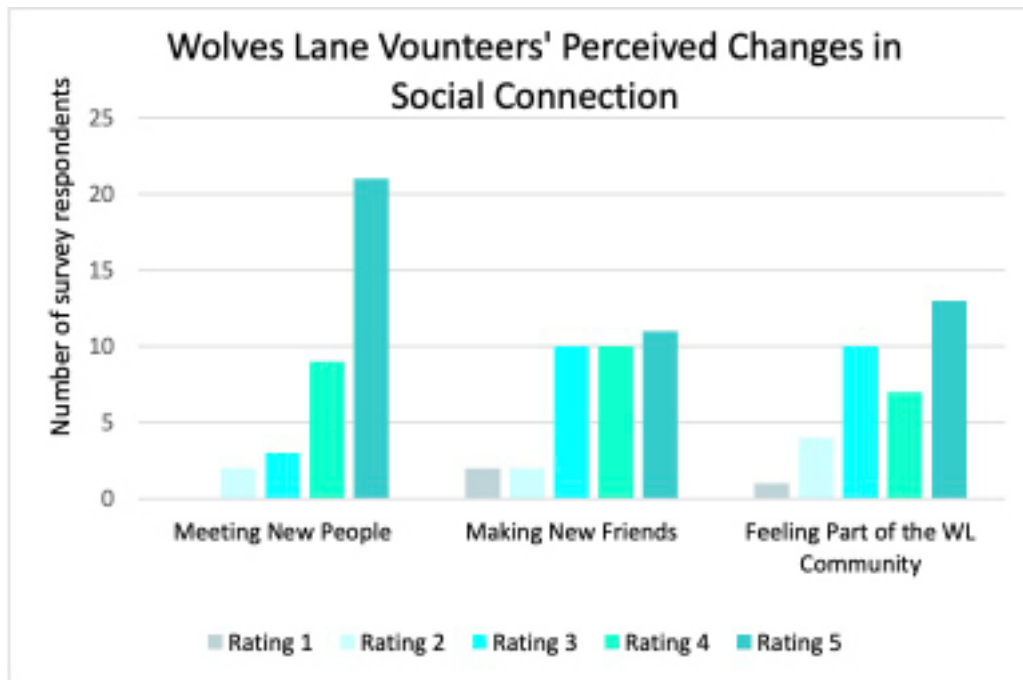


Figure 19: Wolves Lane volunteer survey respondents' ratings of changes in their social connections since they started volunteering at the farm. A rating of 4 or more is categorized as 'high'.



Figure 20: Close bonds, friendships and group identities are formed amongst volunteers. This group is working on their own Tshirt design incorporating the Latin motto 'Crescimus Coniunctim' meaning 'We Grow Together'.



connectedness to the local population and the worthwhile nature of the project are highly valued by volunteers, with 62.9% of survey respondents citing the latter as one of their three main reasons for volunteering there. As one volunteer commented:

*'It is a really worthwhile project and deserves to thrive as it supports local communities with food, building a sense of community, increasing local knowledge and supporting local biodiversity...'*  
(WL survey respondent)

#### **Sense of achievement**

The Cactus Garden (Figure 18a) and the Palm House (Figure 22a) are seen as unique and valued community assets and there is a real sense of achievement amongst those who have rejuvenated

them. Wolves Lane offers many volunteers and visitors a link to their cultural heritage and volunteers recognise its potential to become an important educational resource.

Central to Wolves Lane is growing horticultural crops for commercial and community enterprises and volunteers derive considerable satisfaction from contributing to *'something with a mission which aligns with my values'* as one survey respondent put it and *'being around growing projects'*. Volunteers also conveyed the sense of accomplishment they feel at the end of each session and their pride at having been part of a team which has contributed to the abundance evident in the glasshouses (Figure 21) or Pasteur Gardens.



*Figure 21: Tomato vines in the glasshouse chosen by two interviewees when discussing aspects of Wolves Lane that are important to them, chosen partly because of the joy of seeing the plants grow so impressively this season.*



## Education and skills

The desire to acquire knowledge and skills or make use of existing knowledge and skills features strongly in the Wolves Lane data, with 60 % of survey respondents identifying this as an important reason for volunteering. Moreover, 71.9% of volunteers gave a high rating (4-5) when asked to gauge whether their knowledge or skills have improved since they started volunteering. Comments cited specific horticultural practices for example, propagation, and more generally applicable skills, including people management. Detailed and impressive instances of learning, sometimes linking to aspects of sustainability, were also articulated:

*'Knowledge of tropical plants and their ecological role. Knowledge of how to grow*

*European/Australian/S.African plants which are increasingly viable here due to climate change and can reduce our food import bill if we grow them at scale.'* (WL survey respondent)

*'Very interesting to get a greater understanding of issues around how to manage [a?] harvest, both trying to predict volume and timing and challenges around ensuring that as much harvested produce gets used within sometimes very tight timeframes.'* (WL survey respondent) *Others have decided to obtain horticultural qualifications:*

*'They encouraged me to do a Level 1 course at OrganicLea which I did and am so happy I did it!'* (WL survey respondent)

## Contact with nature

Although Wolves Lane has outdoor growing beds and Pasteur Gardens, much of the cultivation is in glasshouses and some volunteers may choose to work undercover most of the time.

Nevertheless, being outside and in contact with nature are important to volunteers, with 54.3% of survey respondents identifying these as important reasons for volunteering at Wolves Lane. This also

emerged during the interviews:

*'The other thing I love at night is sometimes birds fly through the glasshouses. When I was here at night, I'd see the foxes just being so bold, and they looked really healthy. Yeah, I really enjoy those things.'* (Sean, WL interviewee)

Volunteers also commented on the importance of connecting with plants, soil, and the pleasurable sensory experiences arising from working at Wolves Lane:

*'I love when I come home and I can smell mint and coriander – last week I was picking basil and I could smell it on my hands – I love all that.'* (WL interviewee)

For some volunteers the growing spaces evoke memories of a former home and these were among the locations chosen by interviewees as places of particular importance (Figure 22). One interviewee recalled how the bougainvillea reminded her of being welcomed home from the UK by a young cousin who had filled the returnee's bedroom with the blossom.

Often it is a combination of factors which contribute to the positive experience volunteers have at Wolves Lane, as this comment illustrates:

*'I know I will be in excellent company, having fun surrounded by nature. Plus knowing that I'm helping others while helping myself mentally.'* (WL survey respondent)

## Impacts of Covid-19

Survey respondents and interviewees volunteering during the pandemic said Covid-19 brought significant change to their Wolves Lane volunteer experience and the memories articulated are mixed, complex and often deeply held. Many were unable to continue volunteering, due to shielding or the restriction on numbers introduced at the site, whilst others volunteered at different food growing sites. Some volunteers convey a sense of achievement

for example, being part of a small group who ran the centre for 9 months or working ever more intensively to meet the increased orders for Crop Drop and the Covid meal project. These experiences are explored in more detail in a separate paper (Jackman 2023).

### *Disbenefits*

As at SCF, few disbenefits associated with the physical aspect of volunteering were specified, with insect bites and nettle stings being identified by one interviewee. However, with many of the groups working largely in glasshouses the extreme heat, which closed the farm at times during July/August 2022, was mentioned. Any muscle pain was regarded as positive, indicating the volunteer was getting a good workout, but being able to work at your own pace was identified by a volunteer as important, ensuring she did not overexert herself.

## 5.3 SUMMARY

The Wolves Lane mean well-being scores for the whole cohort and males and females separately are better than the ONS national means but not statistically significant. Nevertheless, participants perceive volunteering at Wolves Lane enhances their physical, mental and nutritional health. The farm increases horticultural knowledge and skills, a key motivator for volunteers. Social connections within the different groups are strong but the sense of belonging to the wider Wolves Lane community is less so.



*Figure 22a: Bougainvillea, Wolves Lane Palm House chosen by three interviewees because it holds special meaning for them. For two it is a reminder of childhood and their cultural heritage and for another it is symbolic of the resurrection of the Palm House. Figure 22b: Grevillea on a pathway between glasshouse at Wolves Lane and a reminder of home for this volunteer.*

# 6. CONCLUSIONS

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## 6.1 MAIN THEMES EMERGING

Volunteers at SCF and Wolves Lane consider volunteering at these urban farms beneficial to their health and well-being.

### *Physical health*

Activities undertaken whilst volunteering are perceived to improve participants' physical fitness with minimal consequential disbenefits. The higher proportion giving improvement in fitness a high rating at SCF probably reflects the greater volume of crops cultivated and the physical demands of the vegbox operation. It is suggested that individuals seek out urban agricultural volunteering opportunities aligned with their needs (Kirkby et al. 2021) and engaging in physical activity was cited more frequently as a reason for volunteering at SCF than at Wolves Lane.

### *Nutritional health*

Based on the survey data, the volunteers' nutritional health is likely to be better than the UK average, given that 50% or more of volunteers at both sites met or exceeded government targets for daily fruit and vegetable consumption. It is probable that volunteers' enhanced understanding of food and seasonality and increased cultivation of fruit and vegetables at home contributes to this.

### *Mental health and well-being*

Improvement in mental health since commencing volunteering at these urban farms is also indicated, with 50% or more of survey respondents at both sites rating this as high (4-5). Aspects of their experience valued highly coincide with factors identified as important in maintaining and enhancing mental health and well-being, having much in common with Well-being Theory (Seligman 2011), cited earlier. This specifies the importance of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and

achievement. For example, volunteers' report being able to relax and de-stress whilst volunteering on the farms. It was important to volunteers at both farms that they had increased contact with nature, with restorative, and mood-enhancing benefits of this being noted, thus endorsing the findings of Hartig (2008); Shanahan et al. (2015). Positive emotions, such as fun, enjoyment, and gratitude, known to positively impact physical health and buffer against depressive symptoms (Friedrickson 2013), are generated by volunteering at these urban farms. The identification of 'contributing to worthwhile project' by such a large proportion of volunteers at both sites is evidence that volunteering here has meaning for those involved and contributes to a sense of purpose. Volunteers at SCF and Wolves Lane articulate that this activity aligns with their values, be it sustainability, food equity, or social justice. For some farm volunteers this is one aspect of a life devoted to activism.

Volunteers at both farms perceive volunteering as enhancing their well-being. Although both farms' ONS4 means are better than the national means, results are not statistically significant. This reflects the variability of volunteers' scores. Subgroups within the volunteer populations at both farms are evident: men at Wolves Lane and women on indoor shifts at SCF have particularly positive well-being scores. Further research would be required to determine why this is so.

### *Education and skills*

Volunteers' high level of engagement is indicated by their acquisition of knowledge and skills, application of these in home gardens and allotments, and their desire to continue learning. Furthermore, the acquisition of knowledge and skills and recognition of changes due to volunteers' individual and collective efforts, be it transforming a field of head-high weeds into a vegetable plot within a year (WL interviewee Appendix 7), or completing a packhouse shift faultlessly (POJ 28/07/22), produces a sense of achievement which may influence their assessment

of life satisfaction.

### ***Connection and belonging***

Urban farm volunteering confers a sense of belonging to many participants as they feel part of the farm community. This is particularly strong at SCF, a long-established unified operation with multiple opportunities for volunteers to meet at common breaktimes, community lunches and events. Whereas at Wolves Lane, the community feeling is harder to build with different enterprises operating on site. However, there is a desire for volunteers to co-ordinate and socialise more. The appointment of a volunteer-coordinator from September 2022 will assist this.

Volunteering on the farms facilitates social networking and many volunteers build positive social relationships which extend beyond the farms. A source of pleasure for volunteers at both sites is the diversity of people they encounter, many noting that these interactions would not happen otherwise. Moreover, anecdotal evidence from volunteers and participant observation supports Pillemer et al.'s (2010: 596) finding that 'nature fosters social interaction and enhances social connection', both of which are positively associated with psychological well-being (Martino et al. 2015)

## **6.2 THERAPEUTIC LANDSCAPES**

While Gesler (1992) applied the term 'therapeutic landscapes' to extraordinary places, it has since been extended to everyday spaces (Bell et al. 2018). I suggest volunteers at both urban farms perceive them to have the qualities associated with this term, fulfilling the definition of being environments 'conducive to well-being' (Martin et al. 2005:1894). For volunteers, the farms' aesthetics, broader multi-sensory experiences, connection with nature and relatively quiet settings, are pleasure-inducing and restorative. An opportunity to engage in activities, which may be challenging or contrastingly, as one volunteer described it 'uncomplicated' but nevertheless absorbing, enables volunteers to dial

down their daily concerns. Social aspects are an important feature within urban farms' therapeutic landscapes, facilitating social interactions in spaces where inclusion is prioritized and facilitated.

Volunteers have multiple reasons for volunteering at their urban farm and derive multiple benefits, including those which enhance and maintain aspects of physical health and improve and protect mental health and well-being. The flexibility of the volunteer offer at both farms is likely to enhance the positive outcomes (Houle et al. 2005). Both sites have a core of committed, highly motivated volunteers for whom volunteering on their farm is life enhancing, and for some positively life changing. These data and concepts such as therapeutic landscapes offer a powerfully evidential and theoretical basis for further studies and investment in community food growing initiatives such as these.

## **6.3 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

Whilst survey response rates at both sites are creditable, I question whether respondents are representative of their respective volunteer cohorts. Notably, response rates at Wolves Lane are higher from groups I knew best. Therefore, extending the research window to increase response rates, particularly from under-represented groups would be advantageous. Moreover, whilst this research has produced useful data and proved the value of incorporating the ONS4 questions, there are many variables influencing self-reported well-being. Hence, whilst the higher mean well-being scores and lower anxiety scores reported by volunteers at both sites compared with ONS means are encouraging, a causal understanding cannot be inferred. Furthermore, the demographic profiles of volunteers at both sites differ from the national population, and whilst adjustments were made for gender imbalance, other adjustments reflecting age and educational profiles would be advantageous. Also, whilst the most recent ONS data was used, it would be better to use contemporaneous local data as it becomes available.



Adjusting the survey to incorporate the government's loneliness measure would be beneficial: participants mentioned loneliness which has a significant impact on health and well-being (Yanguas 2018). Furthermore, ascertaining whether volunteers had met government guidelines for physical activity in the last 7 days would add another dimension to the current physical activity question. I would also establish whether volunteers have adopted a vegetarian, vegan or flexitarian diet which might explain, in part, why the consumption of fruit and vegetables amongst volunteers is higher than in the general population.

Additionally, it would be useful to ascertain whether objective health indicators, such as biomedical markers, uncover any benefits of urban farm volunteering. This would build on Chalmin-Pui et al.'s (2021) study incorporating diurnal cortisol profiles and additional self-reported measures, such as perceived stress. It would also be possible to include additional wellbeing questions using reliable and validated measures, such as the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale. Normed on a UK population and widely used (WEMWBS 2020), this would be suited to a narrowly targeted study forming part of a larger inter-disciplinary research project.

Since health and well-being varies geographically, it is important to extend future research to other UK urban/peri-urban farms to ascertain whether similar patterns of health and well-being and other co-benefits occur. I also support Ilieva et al.'s (2022) suggestion that larger scale, cross-national studies are needed to assess the impact of physical design and programme implementation on social and economic outcomes.

Conducting a longitudinal study on an urban farm would help ascertain whether volunteering benefits vary seasonally, if any variation in self-reported well-being over time replicates variations seen in the national/regional/local populations as a whole, or whether it differs, and if so why? It would also be instructive to conduct a longitudinal study from volunteer induction onwards, so well-being can be tracked from before volunteers become active, in

order to better isolate the impact of volunteering on self-reported well-being scores and establish whether those volunteering in urban farms have well-being scores that differ from the general population from the outset.

Research comparing the benefits of urban farm volunteering, including self-reported well-being, with the benefits of volunteering in other sectors and non-volunteers would be enlightening.

## 6.4 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

In response to the research questions posed at the outset, my findings indicate the following:

**Public engagement in urban/peri-urban agricultural enterprises is perceived by the volunteers to positively affect their health and well-being.**

**These include improvements in perceptions of overall health and well-being, specifically physical, mental and nutritional health.** These findings support earlier research in other urban agricultural typologies (van den Berg et al. 2010; Garcia et al. 2018). Moreover, aspects of volunteering at both urban farms promoting well-being have much in common with those specified by O'Brien et al. (2010) regarding outdoor volunteering (Figure 5) cited earlier and are reflected in the literature on well-being (e.g. Seligman 2011).

In terms of **measurement**, well-being is a notoriously complex and slippery concept (Osman 2021) nevertheless, the exploratory mixed methods approach worked well. Qualitative data from the survey and semi-structured interviews strongly indicates positive health and well-being effects experienced by volunteers. Using mnemonics and Schwarz's (2017) broad questioning approach proved highly effective in stimulating rich descriptions of volunteers' experiences. Notwithstanding the refinements discussed above, the ONS4 well-being questions yielded useful data whose worth will only be fully determined as more detailed ONS data becomes available and more sophisticated

statistical analysis is carried out. The ONS questions have also enabled the identification of subgroups at each site whose well-being differs from the main cohort.

**How do these impacts vary across different urban/peri-urban enterprises represented by two case studies and why?**

Whilst differences between the case studies would be immediately apparent to any visitor, the benefits articulated by the volunteers are strikingly similar. However, differences do exist which reflect each sites' opportunities and constraints, their structure and operation, and their volunteers' motivations. Hence, the improvement in volunteers' physical fitness at SCF is more commonly rated as high than at Wolves Lane. However, the opportunity for vigorous physical activity is greater there, and this was a much stronger motivator for volunteering at SCF than at Wolves Lane, where developing new knowledge rated more highly. Similarly, while a higher percentage of Wolves Lane volunteers gave a high rating to making new friends than at Sutton, the reverse was found in terms of feeling part of the farm community. This probably results from the strong group identity within the different enterprises operating at Wolves Lane and the more frequent contact with the same small number of volunteers offering greater opportunity for friendships to develop. Whereas the strong community feeling at SCF probably reflects its operation as a single unit and the greater opportunities for volunteers across the different activities to socialise on site. Nevertheless, both farms, in my view, constitute therapeutic landscapes, which potentially has both practical and policy applications.

Consideration of the social benefits of urban farms and other types of UPUA are important in strengthening the case for increased land access but are difficult to measure. Yet, as this research confirms, only by asking questions and trying to answer them are we able to ask better questions and refine our research efforts. This is important because well-being is at the heart of social policy and as Stiglitz (2018 n.p.) wrote:

**'If we want to put people first, we have to know what matters to them, what improves their well-being and how we can supply more of whatever that is'.**

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Figure 2 Sutton Community Farm (SCF)

Figure 3 Jackman, J.E. (2022) The Wolves Lane Centre

Figure 4, Santo, R.E., Palmer, A.M., Kim, B.F.(2016) The scope of urban agriculture in 'Vacant lots to Vibrant Plots: A review of the benefits and limitations of urban agriculture', Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, p.2. Available at:

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Figure 6 Exploratory mixed methods research design Procedural diagram. Adapted from Creswell, J.W. and Plano Clark V.I. (2018) 'Designing and conducting mixed methods research.' 3rd Edition. Los Angeles: Sage

Figure 7 Google Earth (2022) Ariel view of Sutton Community Farm, (Accessed 24.06.22)

Figure 8 Profile of respondents to the Sutton Community Farm survey

Figure 9 ONS4 means for Sutton Community Farm compared to national means

Figure 10 SCF volunteers' perceived improvements in health and well-being

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Figure 15 Profile of respondents to the Wolves Lane survey

Figure 16 Wolves Lane volunteers' perceived improvements in health and well-being

Figure 17 ONS4 means for Wolves Lane Volunteers compared to national means

Figure 18 Wolves Lane volunteers (2022) Aspects of Wolves Lane important to health and wellbeing

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Figure 20a and 20b Wolves Lane volunteers\* (2022) Lettuce Club,

Figure 21 Jackman, J.E. (2022) Tomato vines, Wolves Lane

Figure 22 Wolves Lane volunteers (2022) Bougainvillea and grevillea

Figure 23 Google My Maps/SCF (2022) SCF delivery area. Available at:

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Figure 24 Carlin, M. (2022) The Barn, Sutton Community Farm

Figure 25 Glasshouses, Wolves Lane, Organic Lea, <https://www.organiclea.org.uk/2017/03/wolves-lane/>. (Accessed 25.06.2022).

\*My thanks to the two volunteers who created the drawing and designed the T-shirt for allowing these images to be included in this dissertation.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: SUTTON COMMUNITY FARM: SITE DESCRIPTION AND BUSINESS MODEL

The community farm was started in 2010 and has a volunteer base of some 180 people (Cropper 2022) who undertake most of the physical work on the site. It was set up by a local environmental charity, BioRegional, with assistance from EcoLocal (SCF 2022) on a 7.1 acre site (Figure 7), which is part of the Little Woodcote estate in Wallington and currently owned by Surrey County Council, from whom the land is leased (Cropper 2022). The location was chosen in part because the charities considered that the inhabitants of Sutton did not have easy access to outside space, something confirmed by several volunteers (e.g. SCF interviewee A). The community farm has grown significantly during the last 12 years. Having started as a small venture, it has become a serious commercial operation producing over 20 tonnes of agroecologically-grown fruit and vegetables in 2020-21 and buying in another 95 tonnes to supply the online farm shop and 400 weekly vegetable box customers. SCF has an extensive delivery area in Surrey and South London boroughs (Figure 8). Food is also donated to 9 local charities, funded solely through customer donations.

SCF is currently set up as a community benefit society, which is run day-to-day by 15 employees, including a farm manager, growers, vegbox coordinators and a community engagement coordinator, who is responsible for the volunteers and who monitors the farm's social impact (SCF 2022). They are overseen by a management committee but the farm is owned by shareholder members. Anyone can become a member, by purchasing £1 shares, with the minimum investment being £30 and a maximum of £20,000 (SCF 2022). There are, currently 450 members, with the funds raised from selling shares being used to fund the long-term aims of the project, including the construction of The Barn, a packing shed (Figure 24), completed at a cost in excess of £200,000 (SCF 2021), with supplementary funding coming from a

number of charitable trusts.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the operation of SCF, increasing demand for vegboxes by 70%, and seeing a substantial increase in those volunteering, such that a more formalised system of volunteering was introduced, using an online rota system was introduced to cover an increased number of shifts. In the year ending March 2021 the boost in turnover saw the farm generate a surplus of £85,000 (SCF 2021). Post-Covid volunteer numbers and vegbox orders have fallen but the farm is recruiting more volunteers.

SCF's mission statement remains 'to improve well-being and enhance community through people-powered food production that is good for people and the planet' (SCF n.d.a, n.p.).

The community farm has the following aims:

- Provide a space for local people to learn more about growing food
- Foster community and promote health and well-being
- Increase the supply of locally produced food

(SCF n.d. a, n.p)

In 2021, the farm worked through a 'Theory of Change' consultation and, consequently, has decided that its priorities for development include increasing the diversity of volunteers, offering 6-month training placements for growers, working one day a week unpaid and which have largely been taken up by those formerly volunteering on the farm, introducing agroforestry, and pursuing organic certification (SCF n.d. b, n.p.).

Volunteering opportunities are available on alternate Saturdays and on Mondays to Thursdays every week. Volunteers are able to sign up to 3-hour volunteering slots using Three Rings (an online rota management system). There is a regular pattern of shifts each week, driven largely by the vegbox scheme. According to their preference, volunteers can assist with crop production and harvesting in



the fields or polytunnels; several different tasks relating to the vegbox scheme including bag sorting, weighing and packing, as well as composting and DIY/maintenance. A community lunch is offered fortnightly alternating between Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Supported volunteering sessions for adults and young people with autism and learning disabilities run on Mondays and Thursdays. In addition, volunteers are asked to help at special events such as the open days and harvest festival, and there is an increasing number of social events for volunteers.

Despite its success, SCF, like other urban agricultural operations, has identified challenges to meet. Most obvious is the fall in weekly vegbox customers from a peak of 580 during the pandemic to an average of 400 in April 2022. However, this remains higher than the pre-pandemic average of 350. Nevertheless, changes in consumer behaviour have been noticed by the vegbox team and they are aware that

increasing pressure on household budgets may lead to further cancellations or reductions in spend. The challenge is to increase the number of vegbox customers, hold on to existing ones and increase the average spend.

Changing weather patterns is an ongoing but increasing challenge and one which the growing team think about frequently.

SCF is currently taking the necessary steps to achieve registered organic status, this is a fairly lengthy, costly and time-consuming process. However, strategically it is important since achieving organic status will enable SCF to sell surplus produce into similar schemes, many of whom will only accept produce from registered organic suppliers.

SCF would like to be even more inclusive and offer more supported volunteering opportunities but it is proving difficult for the organisations approached to commit to this, despite their enthusiasm to do so.

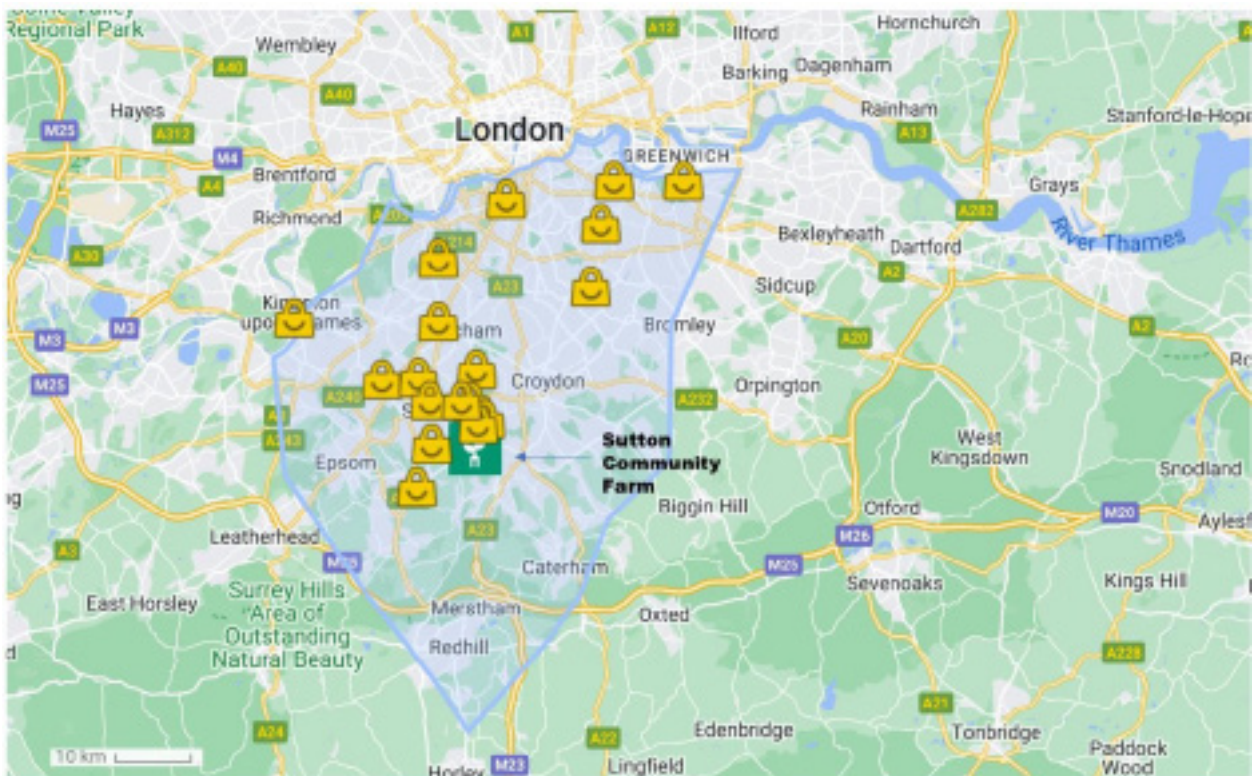


Figure 23: Sutton Community Farm c. 3,000 km<sup>2</sup> delivery area with pick up points marked. Doorstep delivery and farm pick-up is also available. Source: Adapted from SCF/Google Maps.



*Figure 24: The Barn at Sutton Community Farm which serves as packing shed for the online farm shop.  
Source: Mark Carlin, volunteer.*

## **APPENDIX 2: WOLVES LANE CENTRE: SITE DESCRIPTION AND BUSINESS MODEL**

Once a plant nursery for the London Borough of Haringey, the Wolves Lane Centre is located on a 3.6 acre site (Figure 10) in Wood Green which is still owned by the local authority. It is run by a consortium comprising Ubele ‘an African diaspora led, infrastructure plus organisation, .... empowering Black and Minoritised communities in the UK, to act as catalysts for social and economic change’ (Ubele n.d.) and OrganicLea, a well-established workers’ cooperative growing food organically in the Lea Valley. Originally there was third partner, Crop Drop, a local not-forprofit social enterprise, which was based in Tottenham, supplying organic fruit and vegetables, prior to its closure in August 2022. However, more recently it is just Ubele and OrganicLea who are the trustees.

Private commercial companies rent space at Wolves Lane, including Ottolenghi, which grows salad

crops and vegetables for its London restaurants and delicatessens (Ottolenghi n.d.), and the Wolves Lane Flower Company, which grows flowers for wholesale and retail customers sustainably, without the use of pesticides or additional heating (Gray 2021). An important aspect of the centre’s charitable and community work is Black Rootz, ‘the first multigenerational Blackled growing project in the UK, where the older generation share their expertise on growing whilst also supporting youth engagement in their surrounding natural environment’ (Ubele 2022 n.p.)

Each of the enterprises at Wolves Lane has its own team of volunteers and operates out of an allocated glasshouse supplemented by additional outdoor growing space. Wolves Lane volunteers are able to indicate what they would like to do with a weekly timetable of sessions, including food growing, DIY/maintenance, food preparation in the community kitchen, plant sales or working in the historic palm house or cactus garden. Specific sessions are reserved for residents of Fortis Green Recovery House, a crisis house run by a mental health charity (Farrell 2022). Other organisations at the site, including Edible London, operate their own



volunteering programmes independently.

Due to the restrictions on movement and requirements for social distancing at the height of the the Covid -19 pandemic, the income stream from visitors to the Centre and Palm House was lost and volunteering activity at the centre was curtailed. At its most restrictive the number of volunteers was limited to just four from the usual twenty volunteers seen at the site on a weekly basis (Gray 2021). Nevertheless, the Covid-19 pandemic also gave rise to new opportunities with plant sales bringing in several hundred pounds per week when restrictions were at their height (Gray 2021). Edible London, one of the charities operating from the site, expanded its growing to additional sites in Haringey (WL interviewee). Another charity based at Wolves Lane, Food for All, which grows food for foodbanks and supplies the community kitchen at Wolves Lane with produce, maintained operations as the kitchen expanded its production of meals for those in need. The kitchen continues to cook meals for the homeless and sheltered housing tenants and runs a café for visitors.

Wolves Lane has attracted lottery funding for five years to cover staffing and infrastructure and is about to undergo a major redevelopment (Farrell 2022). The development plan for Wolves Lane has food and community at its heart and community sessions, for example, running open days, craft courses and weekly forest school sessions, will be extended as the new ornamental gardens, community event space, classrooms and food packing and distribution warehouse begin construction in September 2022 (Studio Gil 2019). However, the 1960's glasshouses (Figure 25), which are fundamental to current commercial crop production, will remain.

During the writing of this dissertation, Crop Drop ( the local vegbox scheme) announced that they would cease trading in August 2022, as they were no longer able to operate from their current premises in Tottenham and had not been able to find an affordable alternative site. This was a significant blow for some of the producers at Wolves Lane who supplied Crop Drop but alternative distribution partners have been found.



*Figure: 25: Wolves Lane Centre has an impressive complex of glasshouses dating from the 1960's but they are expensive to restore and run. Source: OrganicLea.*

# APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

## Participant Information Sheet for Volunteers on Urban and Peri-urban Farms/Centres

### YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

**Title of Study: The effect of public engagement in urban and peri-urban farms on the health and well-being of volunteers** Department: Institute of Global Prosperity, UCL

**Name and Contact Details of the Researcher:** Jane Jackman (jane.jackman.18@ucl.ac.uk)

**Name and Contact Details of Research Supervisor:** Matt Davies (matt.davies@ucl.ac.uk)

#### 1. Invitation Paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research project for an MSc dissertation. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being undertaken and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Do ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for reading this.

#### 2. What is the project's purpose?

Whilst several studies have been conducted into the benefits of gardening and volunteering in community gardens, little work has been conducted into the benefits perceived by people volunteering on urban and peri-urban farms/centres where commercial food growing is taking place, particularly in the UK. This project aims to address this gap through the use of a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. It will conclude in September 2022.

#### 3. Why have I been chosen?

I would like you to participate in a semi-structured interview because you are a volunteer at Wolves

Lane Centre. I am interested in understanding more about your experience of volunteering there and any benefits you perceive as arising from doing so.

#### 4. Do I have to take part?

Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without any negative consequences to yourself. If you decide to withdraw you will be asked what you wish to happen to the data you have provided up to that point. The default position is that any data you have submitted up to this point will be destroyed.

#### 5. What will happen to me if I take part?

This one-time semi-structured interview will take approximately 40 minutes and the results will be analysed subsequently.

#### 6. Will I be recorded and how will the recorded media be used?

With your agreement, the interview will be audio-recorded. If you do not wish the interview to be audio-recorded just let me know. If you agree to the interview being audio-recorded, I will, nevertheless, stop the recording at any point during the interview or delete it retrospectively should you request this. The recording will be stored on a secure, password-protected device and no one outside the research project will listen to it. The recording will be permanently deleted at the end of the research project.

#### 7. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The interview will involve disclosure of some personal information relating to your perceptions, feelings, and thoughts about volunteering at Wolves Lane and any benefits you perceive personally and more broadly arising from this. Should any of the topics which emerge during the interview cause you discomfort, please do not hesitate to let me know this. You will always have the option to skip a

question you do not wish to answer.

### **8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this research will contribute to the understanding of the nature and extent of any benefits arising from volunteering at a peri-/urban farm or centre where the commercial production of food is taking place. The Landworkers' Alliance, who suggested this research topic, are keen to gain an understanding of this to inform public policy. This research may also help to inform the way in which volunteering is organised at your centre and/or elsewhere.

### **9. What if something goes wrong?**

If you wish to raise a complaint about the researcher you should contact my supervisor, Dr Matt Davies ([matt.davies@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:matt.davies@ucl.ac.uk)). If you consider that your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction you can contact the Chair of the UCL Research Ethics Committee – [ethics@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@ucl.ac.uk)

### **10. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

All the information collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any ensuing reports or publications unless you specifically request to be identified. Your information will be immediately pseudonymised, and the data will be kept on an external hard-drive that will be secured with an encrypted password.

### **11. Limits to confidentiality**

- Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.
- Please note that confidentiality will be maintained as far as it is possible, unless during our conversation I hear anything which makes me worried that

someone might be in danger of harm, I might have to inform relevant agencies of this.

- Please note that anonymity may not be guaranteed, due to the limited size of the participant sample.
- Confidentiality will be respected subject to legal constraints and professional guidelines.
- Confidentiality will be respected unless there are compelling and legitimate reasons for this to be breached. If this was the case we would inform you of any decisions that might limit your confidentiality.
- Confidentiality may be limited and conditional and the researcher has a duty of care to report to the relevant authorities' possible harm/danger to the participant or others.

### **12. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The research results will be incorporated into the MSc dissertation, which will be submitted for grading in September 2022. They may also inform further postgraduate research I undertake in this field. A summary of the findings of this research will be made available to the Landworkers' Alliance and the Wolves Lane Centre manager, Denise Farrell, in autumn 2022. If you would like to receive a copy of the summary, do let me know and I will email it to you.

### **13. Local Data Protection Privacy Notice**

Notice:

The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk)

This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found in our

'general' privacy notice:

For participants in research studies, click here

The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices.

The categories of personal data which may be used will be as follows:

Name

Age

Gender

Ethnicity

Occupation

The lawful basis that would be used to process your personal data will be performance of a task in the public interest.

The lawful basis used to process special category personal data will be for scientific and historical research or statistical purposes.

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. I will pseudonymise any personal data you provide but will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk).

#### **14. Contact for further information**

For further information please contact me, Jane Jackman, by email ([jane.jackman.18@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:jane.jackman.18@ucl.ac.uk)).

You will be sent a copy of this information sheet and will be asked to sign a consent form.

**Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research project.**

## **APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

### **CONSENT FORM FOR VOLUNTEERS IN URBAN AND PERI-URBAN FARMS IN RESEARCH STUDIES**

**Wolves Lane/Pasteur Gardens (Zoom version).**

**Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.**

**Title of Study: The effect of public engagement in urban and peri-urban farms on the health and well-being of volunteers**

**Department: Institute of Global Prosperity**

**Name and Contact Details of the Researcher: Jane Jackman ([jane.jackman.18@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:jane.jackman.18@ucl.ac.uk))**

**Name and Contact Details of Research Supervisor: Dr Matt Davies ([matt.davies@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:matt.davies@ucl.ac.uk)) This study has been approved by the UCL Ethics Committee: Yes**

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialling each box below I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes means that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element that I may be deemed ineligible for the study.



		Tick Box
1.	I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet for the above study. I have had an opportunity to consider the information and what will be expected of me. I have also had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered to my satisfaction and would like to take part in an individual interview.	
2.	I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to 1 week after interview.	
3.	I consent to participate in the study. I understand that my personal information (name, age, gender, ethnicity, occupation) may be collected and used for the purposes explained to me. I understand that according to data protection legislation, 'public task' will be the lawful basis for processing.	
4.	<p><b>Use of the information for this project only</b></p> <p><b>Tick one of these options only</b></p> <p>a) I understand that my data gathered in this study will be stored anonymously and securely, and that I will be pseudonymised or cited anonymously such that, in as far as is practicable, it will not be possible to identify me in any publications.</p> <p>b) I <b>do</b> wish to be named and identified in any publications and for my views and contribution to this research to be acknowledged in this way.</p>	

5.	I understand that my information may be subject to review by responsible individuals from the University for monitoring and audit purposes.	
6.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. I understand that if I decide to withdraw, any personal data I have provided up to that point will be deleted unless I agree otherwise.	
7.	I understand the potential risks of participating and the support that will be available to me should I become distressed during the course of the research.	
8.	No promise or guarantee of benefits have been made to encourage you to participate	
9.	I understand that my data will not be made available to any commercial organisations but is solely the responsibility of the researcher undertaking this study.	
10.	I understand that I will not benefit financially from this study or from any possible outcome it may result in in the future.	
11.	I agree that my anonymised or pseudonymised research data may be used by others for future research. No one will be able to identify you when this data is shared.	
12.	I understand that the information I have submitted will be published as a dissertation and may be used in a blog post, which is also part of the assessment. I wish to receive a summary of the dissertation findings. Yes/No	
13.	<p>I consent to my interview being recorded/audio recorded and understand that the recordings will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stored anonymously, using password-protected software and will be used for training, quality control, audit and specific research purposes. Recording will be permanently deleted at the end of the research.</li> </ul> <p>If you do not want your participation video/audio recorded you can still take part in the study.</p>	
14.	I hereby confirm that I understand the inclusion criteria as detailed in the Information Sheet and explained to me by the researcher.	

15.	I hereby confirm that:  (a) I understand the exclusion criteria as detailed in the Information Sheet and explained to me by the researcher; and  (b) I do not fall under the exclusion criteria.	
16.	I have informed the researcher of any other research in which I am currently involved or have been involved in during the past 12 months.	
17.	I am aware of who I should contact if I wish to lodge a complaint.	
18.	I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.	

**If you would like your contact details to be retained so that you can be contacted in the future by UCL researchers who would like to invite you to participate in follow up studies to this project, or in future studies of a similar nature, please tick the appropriate box below.**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, I would be happy to be contacted in this way	
<input type="checkbox"/>	No, I would not like to be contacted	

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



## APPENDIX QUESTIONNAIRE

5:

Community Farm questionnaire. The questions were adjusted to reflect the different volunteering opportunities available at the Wolves Lane Centre but in all important respects the questionnaires were comparable.

These were the questions used in the Sutton

Question No.	Question	Response Options
1	How did you first find out about volunteering opportunities at Sutton Community Farm?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sutton Community Farm website</li> <li>■ Other social media (e.g. Instagram, Facebook)</li> <li>■ Search engine (e.g. Google)</li> <li>■ A volunteer organisation</li> <li>■ Word of mouth</li> <li>■ Flyer/Leaflet</li> <li>■ Farm events</li> </ul>
2	How long have you been volunteering at the farm?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Less than 1 month</li> <li>■ 1 – 5 months</li> <li>■ 6 – 11 months</li> <li>■ 1 -3 years</li> <li>■ More than 3 years</li> </ul>
3	How often do you volunteer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Every week</li> <li>■ 1 – 2 times a month</li> <li>■ Less often than once a month</li> <li>■ Not actively volunteering at the <u>moment</u></li> </ul>
4	Which activities do you mostly volunteer for?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Crop production (including Harvesting)</li> <li>■ Composting</li> <li>■ <u>Vegbox Packing</u> (including <u>Vegbox</u> bag sorting)</li> <li>■ Combination of <u>Vegbox Packing</u> and Crop Production</li> <li>■ DIY and Maintenance</li> </ul>
5	What are the main reasons for you volunteering at the farm? (Please select a maximum of THREE reasons)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To be outside/ in an open space</li> <li>■ To be closer to nature</li> <li>■ To develop new knowledge and skills</li> <li>■ To use the knowledge and skills I already have</li> <li>■ To meet new people/spend time with friends</li> <li>■ To have <u>fun</u></li> <li>■ To be physically active</li> <li>■ To improve my mental health</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To give time to a project I feel is <u>worthwhile</u></li> <li>■ To be part of the farm community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To help others</li> <li>■ Other:</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
6	What changes have you experienced <u>as a result of volunteering on the farm?</u> (All changes measured on a scale of 1 – 5 from no change to significant positive change)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Meeting new people</li> <li>■ Making new friends</li> <li>■ Feeling part of the farm community</li> <li>■ Increased understanding of food sustainability and seasonality</li> <li>■ Improvement in knowledge and skills</li> <li>■ Growing more fruit and/or vegetables at home</li> </ul>
7	Are there any skills or knowledge you are particularly pleased to have acquired through volunteering at the farm?	Free form answer
8	Have you attended or volunteered at any of the following events? (Answer Yes or No)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Farm Open Days / Public Events</li> <li>■ Volunteer Party / Volunteer Events</li> <li>■ Community Lunch (on Tuesdays or Wednesdays)</li> </ul>
9	Are you a shareholder member of Sutton Community Farm?	Answer Yes or No
10	Do you buy food from the farm's online shop?	Answer Yes or No
11	Have you used any of the recipes on the farm's website?	Answer Yes or No
12	What do you enjoy most about volunteering at the farm?	Free form answer
13	Do you have any suggestions for improving the volunteer experience at the farm?	Free form answer
14	Thinking about your volunteer experience at the farm, which 3 words best describe this?	Free form answer
15	How valued do you feel when you come to volunteer at the farm?	Answers measured on a scale of 1 – 10 from 'I don't feel valued at all' to 'I feel extremely valued'
16	Would you <u>recommend</u> volunteering at the farm to your friends or family?	Answers measured on a scale of 1 – 10 from 'Not at all' to 'Absolutely, yes'

17	What changes have you experienced in your health and well-being as a result of volunteering at the farm? (All changes measured on a scale of 1 – 5 from No Change to Significant Positive Change)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Has there been an improvement in your health and well-being as a result of volunteering at the farm?</li> <li>■ Physical fitness</li> <li>■ Improved diet</li> <li>■ Improved mental <u>health</u></li> </ul>
18	Thinking just about yesterday, how many portions of fruit and vegetables did you eat? (This includes salad, fresh, frozen, tinned fruit and vegetables but excludes potatoes)	<p>Answer in absolute terms.</p> <p>(A portion is 80g, which is 3 heaped tablespoons of cooked fruit or vegetables, a handful of cherry tomatoes, a small bowl of salad or medium-sized piece of fruit, such as an apple.)</p>
19	How important is any produce you bring home from the Elf Shelf in ensuring you and your family eat sufficient fresh produce?	Answers measured on a scale of 1 – 10 from 'not at all important' to 'extremely important'
20	Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?	Answers measured on a scale of 1 – 10 from 'not at all satisfied' to 'completely satisfied'
21	Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?	Answers measured on a scale of 1 – 10 from 'not at all worthwhile' to 'completely worthwhile'
22	Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?	Answers measured on a scale of 1 – 10 from 'not at all happy' to 'completely happy'
23	Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?	Answers measured on a scale of 1 – 10 from 'not at all anxious' to 'completely anxious'
24	Do you have access to outside space at home? (Source: The People and Nature Adult Questionnaire 2020, Natural England)	<p>I have a private <u>garden</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ I have access to a shared <u>garden</u></li> <li>■ I have access to a private outdoor space <u>e.g.</u> a balcony, yard or patio area, but not a garden</li> <li>■ I have access to an allotment at a council/community run <u>site</u></li> <li>■ I don't have access to a garden or n <u>allotment</u></li> <li>■ Other</li> </ul>
25	Has the Covid-19 pandemic had any impact on your experience as a volunteer at the farm?	Answer Yes or No, and provide an explanation

26	Which of <a href="#">these best</a> describes your gender?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Female</li> <li>■ Male</li> <li>■ Intersex</li> <li>■ Non-binary</li> <li>■ Prefer not to <a href="#">say</a></li> <li>■ Other</li> </ul>
27	Into which age group do you fall?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 19 or younger</li> <li>■ 5 year increments up to <a href="#">75</a></li> <li>■ Over 75</li> </ul>
28	Which London borough or area best describes your usual place of residence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Specific London borough</li> <li>■ Surrey County Council</li> <li>■ Outside London or Surrey</li> </ul>
29	If you live outside London or Surrey, please state your local authority area or county in which you live	Free form answer
30	Which option best describes your ethnic group or background?	ONS Census ethnicity index
31	Which of these options best describes your main current activity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Self-employed full-time (30 + hours per week)</li> <li>■ Self-employed part-time (less than 30 hours per week)</li> <li>■ In paid work full-time employment (30 + hours per week)</li> <li>■ In paid part-time employment (less than 30 hours per week)</li> <li>■ Unemployed</li> <li>■ Retired from paid work <a href="#">altogether</a></li> <li>■ Retired but open to employment <a href="#">opportunities</a></li> <li>■ On maternity leave</li> <li>■ Looking after family or home</li> <li>■ In education full-time</li> <li>■ In education part-time</li> <li>■ Long-term sick disabled</li> <li>■ Unable to work because of <a href="#">shortterm illness or injury</a></li> <li>■ On a government training scheme</li> <li>■ Doing something else (please give details)</li> <li>■ Prefer not to <a href="#">say</a></li> <li>■ Other</li> </ul>

32	What is the highest level of education you have completed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Some secondary education</li> <li>■ Completed secondary <u>education</u></li> <li>■ Trade/technical/vocational training</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Some undergraduate education (college or university)</li> <li>■ Completed undergraduate <u>education</u></li> <li>■ Professional qualifications after graduation</li> <li>■ Some postgraduate education</li> <li>■ Completed postgraduate <u>education</u> (<u>masters</u> or <u>doctorate</u>)</li> <li>■ Prefer not to <u>say</u></li> <li>■ Other</li> </ul>
33	On a monthly basis, do you feel you have enough disposable income to have a 'good life'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Yes</li> <li>■ No</li> <li>■ Most of the time</li> <li>■ Sometimes</li> </ul> <p>Option given to explain why</p>

## APPENDIX 6: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed for this research project. The interview will involve me asking you some questions about your experience of volunteering at Sutton Community Farm/Wolves Lane (name specific group e.g. Black Rootz, Pasteur Gardens). I am interested in your views, thoughts and experience and experiences and so there are no right or wrong answers, just tell me what you think.

We have already gone through the information form and the consent form and so this interview, with your agreement, will be audio-recorded. I will stop the recording at any point or delete it retrospectively, should you ask me to do so. The recording will be stored on a secure, password-protected device and the recording will be destroyed once the grading for

the dissertation has been completed. The recording will be converted into a type-written transcript so that it can be analysed more easily. All the information will be anonymised. However, if you do wish to be identified and named in the dissertation, do please let me know and I will be happy to do this. I would also be happy to share a summary report of the research outcomes for Sutton Community Farm/Wolves Lane, should you wish to see this.

How did you become a volunteer at SCF/WL (name group)?

How long have you been volunteering here? How often do you come here?

What are your main reasons for volunteering at SCF/WL?

What does SCF/WL mean to you?

How do you think volunteering here affects you? Have you noticed any changes since you started

volunteering here?

Any disbenefits you have experienced as a result of volunteering at SCF?

Impact on others

Covid experience

Most vivid memories/fondest memories (not necessarily the same)

Memorable experiences/moments

Discuss photos, places, objects chosen – important to you in terms of health and well-being When you are away from the farm/WL for some time what do you miss about it?

Do you/to what extent do you talk to others about SCF/WL (and your volunteering experiences here)? What do you say?

Do you volunteer anywhere else? What do you do?

In what ways, if any, does your volunteer experience at SCF/WL differ from your other volunteering experience/s?

Do you have any suggestions which might further improve the volunteer experience at SCF/WL?

Do you ever think about the wider impact of your involvement with SCF/WL? In what ways?

Views/thoughts on existing food system

In what ways (if any) does this community farm/WL and places like it have the potential to change local community/broader society?

How would you like to see SCF/WL develop?

Are you planning to continue to volunteer at SCF/WL?

Anything you would like to add, anything important haven't covered in terms of health and wellbeing or benefits of volunteering at SCF/WL

Thank you so much for talking to me about your volunteering experience at SCF/WL ....

## APPENDIX 7

Sample from transcript from semi-structured interview with Wolves Lane Volunteer, D.

Interviewer: And so, just for the recording and protocol, there are a few things I just need to mention, which you already know. And so, this interview is about your experience as a volunteer at Wolves Lane. And I'm interested in your views and experiences and your thoughts about that. You've already seen the information sheet and thank you very much for sending the documents back to me. With your agreement, this interview is being recorded. I will stop the recording at any time, or at any point or delete it respectively, should you ask me to do so. The recording is going to be stored on a password protected device and the recording will be destroyed at the end of the project. And I'm using the recording to convert it into a type written transcript so it can be analysed more easily. All the information that you supply will be anonymised. And you've asked to have a summary of the research and I'm happy to send that to you.

D: yeah that's great.

Interviewer: So could you tell me how did you become a volunteer at Wolves Lane?

D: And so it was um in between lockdowns for Covid, um. There wasn't so much going on, there wasn't much to do, and so and I've always loved gardening and [pause]. So yeah so I put my name down for Wolves Lane, and I also looked into volunteering at like the lost dogs' home or one of the animal charities. So. yeah [name] was like look it's obviously to give something back to the Community but also for yourself, so there needs to it needs to be something that'll give you a boost and, yes, spending time outside and time with animals always gives me a boost. Interviewer: So that's good that's good. I'm interested in the Covid experience but we'll come to that shortly. So, how long do you think you've been volunteering there?



D: So, it was one year in April. Yeah.

Interviewer: Right. Okay, and have you always volunteered with the same group?

D: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, I started out with [name] food growing and then and stayed with that. So, I wanted to grow food.

Interviewer: Okay, so always that [group identifier] group. So, um, now that you've been volunteering there say let's say approximately 16 months. What does it, what does it mean to you?

D: It's like it's the fun thing that I do on a [day of the week] and yeah it's like it's about being outside growing plants. But also, it's about catching up with all the people that I have made friends with, yeah.

Interviewer: Do you think it would be the same if you were growing ornamental plants and shrubs say?

D: Yeah it could be, but I always love to grow food. So I've had vegetable gardens before, yeah and being in London that's a bit trickier, so this is a way of sort of filling that gap.

Interviewer: So, are you able to grow your own food at home?

D: I do yeah, yeah. I've got like lots of tomato plants right now in containers on a deck. [Points to containers outside]

Interviewer: Okay, yes. And so, have you noticed any changes in yourself since you started volunteering there?

D: Yeah, so like it's like an incredibly supportive and helpful thing to do.

Interviewer: Yeah, you seem like a very close, harmonious, tight group.

D: Huh. Yeah, great people. People always like [pause]. You know, we call it, the Lettuce Club, so we have this sort of motto. Ah, you didn't know that?

Interviewer: No, I didn't but now it makes sense

because yesterday I saw a picture and so, and it said Lettuce Club and it said the bottom 'we grow together'.

D. Yes, yeah. yeah, so I think [name of volunteer] jokingly called it Lettuce Club with her boyfriend and sister-in-law at home, and then it just kind of stuck and so [name of another volunteer] made that picture, for I think it was [name of grower] birthday. And one day like we were talking about like I asked [name of volunteer], because she knows a lot of Latin, I said, if we had a motto for Lettuce Club in Latin what would it be? And she came back, she went away and thought about it for a few days, and she texted me like a whole list of different mottos. Then

I think she landed on the 'crescimur conjunctim' the 'We grow together' thing. And so [name] was working on, like creating like a logo for us so she made like a little character who's like a lettuce leaf with like you know, like arms and legs, whistling a tune, as its walking along and throwing some seeds. And so, we're planning on making up some T shirts and then they'll have the 'we grow together' motto.

Interviewer: That's amazing. Oh, I say well I'm thankful I mentioned that.

D: So, yeah, so like we have this name for it like it's Lettuce Club and like yeah people definitely help each other outside of volunteering. If I need any help or like, you know, there's a celebration say, like the birthday you saw, yeah. So it's really like it's a - it's more than just the volunteering sessions.

Interviewer: And, did you know any of these people before?

D: No.

Interviewer: Now this is going to sound like a strange question, but the reason I'm asking is because in the one of the papers I've been reading, they say that this question is not asked often enough, and it should be so have you noticed any disbenefits of volunteering at Wolves Lane? It might be to do with health and well-being or it just might be more broadly, but any negatives attached to it?

D: Yeah, no. That is a good question and that's right that they should ask that in the research. I guess nettle stings are a disbenefit. So here have definitely been times, where I've volunteered and it's been maybe a bit hot or a bit physical and I've been tired afterwards, but yeah that's not, that's it. That's all I can think of.

Interviewer: And in terms of the Covid experience, so because you said it was between lockdowns so what was it like volunteering during that Covid time and how is it different to now?

D: Yeah, so, like I said, I think it was between lockdowns. And I'm totally lost - I don't have a timeline of - I mean I just I know I put my name down to volunteer at Wolves Lane. And then, and I couldn't start right away - like there was a lag because everything was closed there because of Covid - and so when we started it was really cool because it was kind of like one of the first things that I was able to go out and do because of lockdown. And yeah, I remember like we started, like the first day we were harvesting lettuce. And I just remember like not knowing what to talk to people about because it had been lockdown, and I was like I don't want to just talk about shows I've watched on Netflix last night. I mean obviously there's the getting to know you stuff, but it was like you remember those first few interactions with that going out in the world after Covid it was like well how does this work again? I remember thinking that. Yeah and it was a great thing to do, because we were outdoors so we didn't have to wear masks. And we didn't have to worry about yeah being in an enclosed space and getting Covid from each other.

Interviewer: So did you all start at the same time, then?

D: Yes, so I started the same time as [name of volunteer] and then [name of volunteer] joined and then [name of volunteer] a little bit later on. Yeah, so people [joined] within a couple of months

Interviewer: Okay. Is there anybody that that comes regularly to that and the [group identifier] that I haven't met.

D: Excuse me. Um, have you met [name of volunteer]?

Interviewer: No, no, I haven't.

D: So yeah [names of volunteers] sort of started off like around April, I think.

D: And I think I remember it clearly because it was right before I went away for a month, and we had like a one year like celebration because we'd all been going for a year, and so we had this

like a little birthday party. Like we had a cake and a candle and, yeah, and I brought along the T-shirt and showed everyone. That was the first time they heard about us doing it. And yeah and that was when I think that was the first time I met [names of volunteers]

Interviewer: So that do the T-shirts actually exist already or is it something that's going to be produced?

D: Ah, no we made, we made a sample. You want to see it?

Interviewer: Oh, yes, if it's to hand.

D: Yes. [fetches T-shirt]

D: Sorry, and it says that's the back, I think, and that's the front. But um so yeah we made we just made this one up me and [name]. But I think we've got to [laughs]. My feedback to [name] was I can't wear white T-shirts like they're going to get really dirty straightaway, especially for gardening. So we're going to come up with different colours and we need to find someone in that can print it.

Interviewer: That will be really good.

D: Yeah, yeah it's really fun.

Interviewer: And so now you've already described, you know some very memorable times really with [group identifier]. Are there other particularly memorable moments either good or bad, but just that stick in your mind.

D: Yeah we had we had a barbecue. There have

been a couple of barbecues or bonfires and things out at the Pasteur Gardens. We had one, together with Black Rootz. Yeah that was brilliant that was so great, and I really like the Black Rootz guys, there are a lot of fun. And I say guys because it's mostly guys that I've known. But then at the barbecue there were some women as well that I met for the first time. And yeah like [name of volunteer] brought drums, so there was drumming. And it was, I think it was Jamaican Independence Day so, yeah they talked a bit about that. I played the game of dominoes with the women. Like yeah it was that was supercool - like that crossover between groups is really nice, um. And, yeah, we've had a kind of like harvest feast sometime maybe in the in the autumn. And that was really lovely. Like, because there's no electricity out there, we had candles and everybody brought food and there was a bonfire and it was the first time [name] got to see the garden.

And another memory that sticks out is, like, because we weren't was playing for quite a while before we ever went to Pasteur Gardens and then. We went to Pasteur Gardens, and like no one had been on site. Well, the Black Rootz guys had been there and I think [name of grower] might have been around, but no one had been on our patch for a while and the weeds were like as tall as [gestures with hand as far as arm will stretch]. It was it was summer and the weeds were just like this high [gestures again] and nettles and yeah it was quite shocking. We were like 'oh, no'. Like we've got such a huge task and so that's you know, obviously, like it was a bit of a slump but it's really cool to have seen like that progress.

Interviewer: yeah

D: mm hmm yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah. And it's just nice to see to see beds with things growing in them, and especially like after the weeds and it looks beautiful. It's just like wow because you couldn't see beds before [now] you can differentiate between a bed or path. Like everything was just... [tails off into silence]

Interviewer: We can see what it was like from the rest of it. Some might describe it as kind of a one up from guerrilla gardening. Being enclosed and surrounded by untended land from the security of

the crops point of view is actually quite a good thing [the site has been subjected to vandalism, theft and arson] D: huh huh and from biodiversity.

Interviewer: Completely, yeah.

D: But yeah and we didn't - it's not like [Pause]. I think in a normal setting, like maybe, you know. Sorry - I say normal but, like a commercial setting, you'd probably have like a ride on machine or something - I mean definitely a functioning strimmer.

Interviewer: yeah.

D: We do have a strimmer it's on and off it's kind of yeah. [Silence] Interviewer: When I came a bit of it was lost.

D: Yeah. A piece got lost and also we started at Pasteur Gardens and the strimmer was there for like the first or second week because I remember, that was where the compost [pause]. Have you been out to the compost pile there? You couldn't walk to the compost pile when we started. Like, I had to - that was the first job that I remember doing there was with the strimmer and like clearing to get to the compost pile. There was just a wall of weeds. So we did that, at the beginning, but then the strimmer just disappeared for a while, like for four months, and so we had to then do all of the like weed removing with a scythe, which is not the most effective.

Interviewer: No – I imagine that.

D: It's a lot of fun, but it's like you know all of that, like that's what I meant about it's gone from being like a huge like absolutely like just a forest of weeds to being beds and paths - like that didn't happen quickly or easily like it happened in a very non-technical way too.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah so lots of labour involved.

D: You wouldn't see that in a commercial setting. Like there is no way you would pay people a wage to do it that way, it would be much more cost effective to go ahead and buy a strimmer and maintain it.

Interviewer: Well, I'm hopeful that we'll find that

missing part.

D: Me too - it's got to be somewhere.

Interviewer: When you're away from Wolves Lane and Pasteur Gardens and you're just thinking about the place, what images come to mind, D?

D: Like at the moment, I have this great image of the glass house that we're in now at the end, the end glass house and how it's just packed with growth I'm like because the tomatoes are so high. And images of like, yeah, the group of people, Lettuce Club people. And like, yeah, it's like there's there's the glass house where now there's the polytunnel, where we started. I guess you saw that as well?

Interviewer: Honestly, I didn't know about that until last week because we have always been in that end glass house, so I thought the old poly tunnel was derelict. I was surprised to be finding that a year ago that was the area where the crops were grown.

D: That's where we started. So we started there, we were only there, and then we went to Pasteur

Gardens, which was like just weeds. And now we've moved on from that, so we've got Pasteur Gardens that has actual beds and paths and we have this incredibly luxurious glass house like that's a top set up, honestly.

Interviewer: Oh, I'm very glad.

D: Really, derelict is a brilliant way to describe it really. Well, um, so yeah, so this is like all of those places come to mind, yeah.

Interviewer: Do you talk about your volunteering at Wolves Lane and Pasteur Gardens to other people.

D: yeah.

Interviewer: What do you tell them?

D: And I tell people that I volunteer at a community garden once a week. That we grow food, and I was telling people that it was for like Covid food packages. Really that's what we started out doing but that's changed now because the funding for that

program finished. Okay. So, so, yeah that's what I tell them. I tell people that it's called Lettuce Club sometimes. But, yeah, I'm quite proud of it - like it's a really good thing to do.

## APPENDIX 8

Summary of Sutton Community Farm data for ONS4 personal well-being questions and ONS national, regional, and local data

ONS Questions	SCF Mean Ratings			SCF Weighted Data 95% Confidence Levels		SCF Mean Ratings		ONS Mean Ratings 6-17 <sup>th</sup> July 2022			ONS 95% Confidence Levels England 6-17 <sup>th</sup> July 2022		ONS London Mean Ratings Jan-Mar 2022	ONS London Borough of Sutton Mean Ratings April 04/2020-03/2021*	
	All	Male	Female	Weighted for gender	LCL	UCL	Female indoor ** 15	Female Outdoor ** 7	All	Male	Female	LCL	UCL	All	All
Life Satisfaction	7.56	7.2	7.9	7.55	7.09	8.01	8.47	7.29	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.9	7.1	7.45	7.4
Worthwhile	7.93	7.2	8.3	7.74	7.35	8.13	8.67	7.86	7.2	7.1	7.3	7.1	7.4	7.68	7.7
Happy	7.51	6.7	7.9	7.31	6.80	7.82	8.47	6.43	7.1	7.1	7.0	6.9	7.2	7.29	7.3
Anxious	3.12	3.3	3.0	3.13	2.38	3.88	2.67	3.0	3.9	3.6	4.2	3.7	4.1	3.51	3.1

### Notes:

Latest data release at the time of writing (14/08/22) used in all cases.

\*Only means for the whole sample are published by the ONS for local data. The profile of the borough data is not publicly available. Each volunteer's data was compared to the local authority data in which they reside, however, the Sutton data is included here for illustration and comparison, as this is where most SCF volunteers live.

\*\*Means for females working indoors and outdoors are calculated for those indicating they volunteer exclusively in these areas. The average ages of females volunteering exclusively indoors is 59 years and 53 years for those indicating their volunteering is solely on outdoor activities.

## APPENDIX 9

**Summary of Wolves Lane Centre data for ONS4 personal well-being questions and ONS national, regional, and local data**

ONS Questions	WL Mean Ratings			WL Weighted Data 95% Confidence Levels		ONS Mean Ratings 6-17 <sup>th</sup> July 2022			ONS 95% Confidence Levels England 6-17 <sup>th</sup> July 2022		ONS London Mean Ratings Jan-Mar 2022	ONS London Borough of Haringey Mean Ratings April 04/2020-03/2021*			
	All	Male	Female	LCL	UCL	All	Male	Female	LCL	UCL	All	All			
Life Satisfaction	34	11	18	7.1	7.8	7.3	7.5	6.8	8.3	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.1	7.45	7.2
Worthwhile	7.4	7.9	7.5	7.7	6.9	7.2	7.1	7.3	7.1	7.4	7.68	7.6			
Happy	7.6	8.0	7.3	7.6	7.0	7.1	7.1	7.0	6.9	7.2	7.29	7.1			
Anxious	2.7	2.3	2.4	2.4	1.5	3.9	3.6	4.2	3.7	4.1	3.51	3.6			

**Notes:**

Latest data release at the time of writing (14/08/22) used in all cases.

\*Only means for the whole sample are published by the ONS for local data. The profile of the borough data is not publicly available. Each volunteer's data was compared to the local authority data in which they reside, however, the Haringey data is included here for illustration and comparison, as this is where most WL volunteers live.



# SPACES THAT EMPOWER WOMEN LEARNERS - THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUILT ENVIRONMENT, LEARNING AND EMPOWERMENT OF VULNERABLE WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT SETTINGS

ISMAT JUMA

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## Abstract

With conversations about women’s empowerment becoming more common, it is even more important to look at the empowerment of women in social development settings, who are at risk of being most vulnerable to poverty, violence and harassment. Current empowerment programmes aim to prepare women to respond to their current and future circumstances so that women can achieve things they value and not just maximize income, within which emphasis has been placed on formal and informal learning. Given its importance on women’s empowerment, scholars have looked into various factors that impact learning of women and girls, highlighting one such factor as the built environment of learning spaces. This research aims to look at the relationship between built environment, and empowerment & learning for vulnerable women. The study explores how vulnerable women who participate in social projects experience the built spaces they are provided to learn in. This was done using a mixed methods research design, systematically reviewing existing literature, developing a case study on WONDER Foundation’s core element of ‘Empowering Spaces’, and incorporating interviews with design experts, to provide a holistic perspective and add to existing scholarship. Through primary and secondary data, the research provides an operational definition for

‘Empowering Spaces’, looks at contradictions with the similar existing concept of ‘Safe Spaces’, highlights elements of empowering spaces, and lastly looks at organizational challenges in developing empowering spaces. Based on these findings, this thesis conceptualizes ‘Empowering Spaces’ and provides action-based recommendations for Wonder Foundation.

Key Words: Built Environment, Women Empowerment, Empowering Spaces, Education, Development

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## List of abbreviations

BE – Built Environment

SS – Safe Spaces

ES – Empowering Spaces

WE– Women Empowerment

ESL – English as a Second Language

WF – WONDER Foundation

GC – Grand Challenges

WGSS – Women and Girls Safe Spaces

NFE – Non-Formal Education

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

SDSs – Social Development Settings

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

'Grand Challenges' (GCs) are issues that if resolved, would help solve important global societal problems. One characteristic of GCs is the need for coordinated and sustained effort from various actors like social development organizations and governments. The most widely adopted organized effort addressing GCs and bringing stakeholders together are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (George et al., 2016).

Aiming to better address 'Gender Inequality' as one of the GCs, many institutions have taken up the mantle to develop projects working towards women and girls empowerment in line with SDG 5 (United Nations, 2022). However, studies show that even though "most international development organizations include women's empowerment and gender equality as a key objective, what empowerment means and how best to support it remains a matter of debate" (Eyben, 2011).

To better understand women empowerment (WE) within social development programs, this thesis looks at the connections between WE, learning and the built environment (BE), for vulnerable women in social development settings.

## 1.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This research aims to look at the relationship between BE, empowerment and learning for vulnerable women. I will explore how vulnerable women participating in social learning projects experience the BE they are provided, which may vary in quality due to challenges faced by organizations. The research will look into what 'empowering' learning spaces look like and how they impact empowerment of vulnerable women. I will also look at factors that social organizations consider while planning spaces, what they consider as an empowering space and the challenges they face.

For this research, I collaborated with WONDER Foundation (WF), and focus on one of their core elements: Empowering Spaces (ES) which, recognizes the significance of infrastructure and safe environments, as key aspects impacting women's education.

### 1.2.1 Research Questions:

This research aims to answer the following questions:

- a) What is an Empowering Space?
- b) Is an Empowering space the same as 'Safe Spaces'?
- c) What does an 'empowering' learning space look like and how it impacts women empowerment in development settings
- d) Which factors do organizations consider regarding spaces while planning projects

## 1.3 KEY TERMS

### Women Empowerment (WE):

Empowerment has become a common concept in development and feminist literature, within which several definitions of empowerment exist. Ojediran and Anderson (2020) suggest that empowerment pertains to five dimensions: social, economic, educational, political and psychological (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020). For this study, I build on feminist perspectives of WE and focus on human agency and self-efficacy, centred on the notion of 'inner transformation' to exercise choice (Adjei, 2015). As such, I define WE as building a woman's capacity to be able to make strategic life choices, and developing their agency to act effectively within current power structures and systems (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020).

### Safe Spaces (SS):

The concept of 'safe spaces' has been used in

relation to feminism and women's movements since the 20th century (Collective, 2014). However, Lewis et al. suggest that the concept has been neglected in academia, specifically in defining what 'safety' and 'spaces' for women mean, and how they are experienced by women to be considered 'safe.' As such, they put forth a distinction between 'safe from' and 'safe to' suggesting that when women are "safe from harassment, abuse and misogyny, they feel safe to be cognitively, intellectually and emotionally expressive" (Lewis et al., 2015).

SS are operationally defined, as a physical space where individuals can be safe from physical harm or threat, the feminist movement, uses the term mostly in reference to a dedicated physical space for survivors of domestic violence and rape, for establishing freedom of expression and safe from discrimination. In the development context however,

SS have been used interchangeably with "safe haven" by professionals working on displacement and refugee issues in conflict areas (Mountz, 2017).

As such, in this paper I will define SS as spaces where women are safe from physical and emotional harm and can be expressive without fear.

### **Humanitarian Architecture**

The term 'humanitarian' implies elements of welfare for people in need. In line with Charlesworth's classification, I will be defining humanitarian architecture as design competences used to "assist vulnerable communities, after crises such as social conflict, war or natural disaster" (Charlesworth, 2014).

### **Social Development Setting (SDS)**

Midgley defines Social Development as "a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population within the context of a dynamic multifaceted development process" (Midgley, 2014). Building on Midgley's definition, I suggest that the social development sector works to improve the well-being and quality of life of vulnerable communities in collaboration with multiple actors, to "introduce opportunities to vulnerable

populations, provide social development, and help improve public sectors

that require support and catalyse growth" (Ackah, 2022). As such, I define SDSs as organized planned initiatives designed for societal change and well-being of vulnerable communities involving multiple actors, such as NGOs, International Aid Agencies, Governmental initiatives.

## **1.4 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE**

With conversations about WE becoming common, it is imperative to look at the concept in SDSs, where women would be at risk of being most vulnerable to poverty, harassment and violence. Research has found that the development sector's empowerment programmes aim to prepare women to respond to their current and future circumstances so that women can achieve things they value and not just maximize income (Macarthy et al., 2017). However, Porter suggests development agencies tend to use the term 'empowerment' vaguely, without considering cultural or local contexts and consider "economic independence as the specified objective" of their programmes (Porter, 2013). Hence, it is important to further study practices deployed by development agencies working towards the empowerment of vulnerable women.

Discourse on WE has changed over time, Cornwall notes a shift from emphasis on access to external resources and services to a larger emphasis on the creation of ES to "build confidence and self-esteem, changing how they may have been taught to see themselves as women, as citizens and as human beings"(Cornwall, 2016).

Though some organizations have tried to define empowering environments, characterizing them as spaces "promoting a sense of ownership and belonging, while remaining an inclusive space that is part of the wider community life" (IRC, 2020), not enough research has been done on ES for vulnerable women and characteristics of such spaces, making it crucial for us to look at what is

meant by ES in SDSs for women.

Scholars have noted the important role education plays and its contributions for WE. Marcus and Page suggest that education contributes to WE in three specific ways: a) capacity building through skills development leading to opportunities for economic empowerment, and equitable relationships, b) helping build women and girls' "self-confidence, 'agency', and ability to express their hopes and make decisions about their own lives", and lastly c) developing 'gender-equality attitudes' among girls and boys (Marcus & Page, 2016).

Given its importance on WE, scholars have looked into factors that impact education and learning of women and girls. One such factor is the BE of learning spaces, with many studies exploring the link e.g. studies in West Africa indicate that improved infrastructure lead to increased exam pass rates for girls (Marcus & Page, 2016)

Scholarship has also looked into the impact of the BE on well-being, feelings of belonging, and identity of students, which support learning. Noble goes on to emphasize the impact design of learning spaces has on social interactions and learning outcomes (Noble, 2014).

BE of schools, e.g. useable female washrooms, has also been seen as a major factor in school enrolment in the global south, with projects finding that "the construction of schools with girlfriendly amenities proves to be a successful strategy for improving enrolment and test scores" (Kazianga et al., 2012).

Despite the research done on the connection between the BE, learning spaces and empowerment, not a lot of scholars have looked into the combination of the three concepts, that is, how the BE of learning spaces impact WE in SDSs. As such, given the importance of education and empowerment and the link between the two for vulnerable women and girls, this study will look at how the BE impacts both in SDSs. I will also look at what constitutes as an empowering learning space and what factors impact the creation of such spaces.

Most research on BE and WE, revolves around

exclusion of women and girls from public spaces, where women have been segregated to private spheres and denied the benefits that cities and public spaces hold, disempowering them of their identities (Fagan & Trudeau, 2014; Rfo, 2017).

Stemming from exclusion and threat in public spaces, is the creation of SS for women, which along with activists working within these spaces facilitate WE. In the context of humanitarian development, Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS) initiatives serve as a physical space "cocreated with women and adolescent girls entangled in conflict, disasters and displacement which supports their empowerment and participation in humanitarian settings where they can be free from harm and harassment" (IRC, 2020). Hence, as part of this research, I also look at how the concept of SS can be linked to ES for women, and how the BE factors into such spaces.

Based on the linkages established between Learning, WE and BE, I will study what an empowering learning space looks like for vulnerable women and if it differs based on their context, what impact it has on them and what factors influence the creation of such spaces. Lastly, since the research aims to look at empowerment of vulnerable women, I will at these concepts within SDSs.

## 1.5 CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Given the various elements involved in this study, I build on multiple concepts and theories through which to look at the findings and add to the scholarship.

The first concept I consider is based on the feminist movement, studying the freedom and emancipation of women. Within this movement it is understood that social systems we live with are influenced by a culture of inequality, resulting in the creation of a gendered environment, creating male and female identities for spaces. Such gendered spaces vary based on social structures and cultures, leading to the conclusion that spaces have meanings attached

to them and can hence convey gendered messages which set the tone of how gender is understood in that space (Boyles, 2019).

Gendered spaces hence link architectural characteristics with gender dynamics, leading to the BE becoming gendered and polarized. The feminist movement criticizes such spaces and suggest that they create a contradiction between women's experience and the physical aspects of the BE, which in turn impacts women's behavior as "the design of a physical place influences the mental state of the people in that space and shapes their attitudes and behaviour" (Paiva, 2018).

The concept of 'built environment' itself is fairly new. In its essence, BE not only includes physical building and infrastructure but also involves natural, economic, social and cultural capital. The term 'built environment' has also over the years been used to address the relation between the 'built' and the 'unbuilt' elements of the environment, showcasing the "social– ecological system" where BE overlaps with culture and nature (Hassler & Kohler, 2014).

BE can as such be seen as embodying cultural and social structures which impact learning and behavior. This concept is in line with the Social Learning Theory which suggests that learning takes place through observation of or interaction with the surrounding environment, that also helps individuals discuss and solve their problems (Bandura, 1977; Gupta, 2021). Linking BE and social learning, Boyles suggests that since the mind is conditioned by an individual's surroundings and culture, and BE embodies culture, it can as such "condition the mind of its inhabitants" (Boyles, 2019). As such I argue that BE of social development organizations can have an impact on WE.

Building on the social learning theory, it can be suggested that interaction with the community helps vulnerable individuals not only learn, but also discuss and solve their problems. As such, in regards to vulnerable women, participating in empowerment projects through NGOs helps them discuss their issues, and find solutions. This also helps women develop their confidence and create

their own identity, while boosting morale and creativity (Gupta, 2021).

Exploring the role of NGOs, Batliwala discusses how empowerment involves women recognising ideologies of male domination and maintenance of oppression, suggesting that external agents such as NGOs are needed to provide women access to new information and knowledge, leading to empowerment (Batliwala, 1994).

Hennink Et Al. building on Batliwala's theory brings light to how important perspectives of development practitioners are in not only defining empowerment but also in identifying how initiatives can effectively strengthen empowerment strategies and embed them in development practice (Hennink et al., 2012).

Similarly, this study builds on the above scholarship, to define what empowering learning spaces are, how they impact WE in SDSs and what factors are considered while trying to develop such spaces for vulnerable women, with the aim of embedding ES in development practice.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study not only aims to develop a better understanding of ES for women in SDSs, but also hopes to understand what ES means to development and design practitioners and what factors they consider while creating spaces in SDSs. As such, this study uses a mixed methods research design, aiming to explore viewpoints of the different actors involved. This chapter describes the methodology used for the current study.

### 2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research comprises of four stages, incorporating the various research methodologies and the combined findings. Figure 1 displays the flow of the research design and how it was visualized.

The first stage looks at existing literature, through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), to explore existing concepts, gaps in literature, and potential best practices. A SLR studies existing literature through a set process, and is conducted before an

empirical research (Xiao & Watson, 2019).

Secondly, I look at WF as a case study within a larger evaluation. Case studies can be categorized as an empirical methodology that explore current phenomenon in depth, through real-world context, and can be used in combination with a larger evaluation design as a mixedmethod study (Yin, 2017).

Next, I use expert interviews with design practitioners to understand what ES mean to them in an international development context and the factors they consider while creating spaces for vulnerable groups, to compliment findings from WF. Expert interviews are a qualitative empirical research tool and collects data about specific topics of interest focusing on the knowledge of expert participants (Döringer, 2021).

Lastly, findings from the three methods will be synthesized to present the discussion and provide future recommendations.

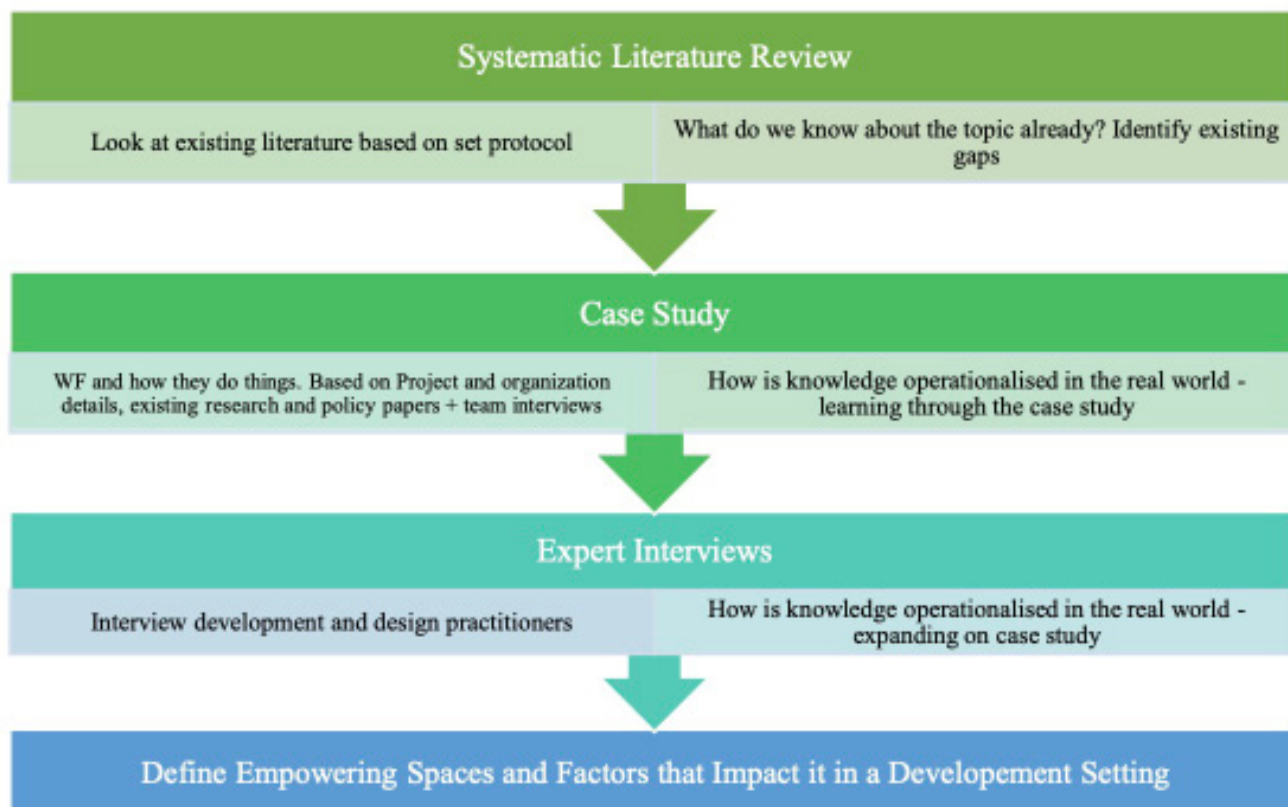


Figure 1 Research Methodology

## 2.2 DATA COLLECTION

### SLR:

The study will use a narrative systematic review, which acts as a descriptive review and focuses on “gathering relevant information that provides both context and substance to the research topic” (Xiao & Watson, 2017).

I developed a protocol to structure the SLR and based on initial research identified key words to narrow down the search. These key words included: Empowerment, Built Environment/ Spaces, Women Empowerment, Learning, Education, Humanitarian Space, Safe Spaces, WGSS, Learning Space, Empowering Spaces, Humanitarian architecture, International Development, school design, vulnerable women, planning, NGOs, Social Architecture.

A review search was then carried out using a combination of these terms on two databases, Google Scholar and SCOPUS.

The following criteria was established to decide source eligibility for inclusion in this study:

- The source concerns a combination of the key terms and concepts, specifically in terms of WE and spaces in the development or education context.
- The source gives definitions or factors for the key concepts, e.g., factors that impact WE in educational or development settings.
- The source was published in or after the year 2000.
- The source is written in English
- The source is from an academic journal or publisher; Gray literature can be considered credible if published by a reliable organisation.

As the table below shows, literature search yielded 1550 studies in total, including duplicates. After evaluating the titles and abstracts using the above

criteria 59 were shortlisted. I then compared the full text to the above criteria, selecting 16 studies.

	Results	Shortlisted	Included
Google Scholar	1468	34	10
SCOPUS	82	25	6
Total	1550	59	16

*Table 1 SLR Results*

### Case Study:

The case study on WF was developed by:

- Gathering information from WF’s website
- Reading existing research and reports (gray literature) developed by WF
- Reading policy recommendation and papers worked on by WF
- Interviewing team members and partners working with WF to better understand their core element of ES and the issues they face. 5 semi-structured interviews were conducted. Though limited, the participant pool covered a range of actors involved at different levels, from Senior Management to Partner Organizations.

### Expert Interviews:

I conducted interviews with design practitioners from development practice backgrounds, to get further insights. I identified interviewees by conducting a search for people working in relevant organizations and contacted them via email. Eventually, only 2 of 19 potential participants were able to participate in

the research. Due to the small sample size, I used the expert interviews to complement the findings from WF to give a brief perspective of how design experts would view ES as compared to development practitioners.

**Interviews:**

All interviews were semi-structured, questions for which were prepared based on the findings of the SLR and information from WF. All interviews were conducted online via zoom and were recorded for transcriptions.

**Interview Analysis:**

All interviews were analysed using NVivo, employing the thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis systematically identifies and organises data so insights can be identified within data sets allowing researchers to make “sense of collective meaning and experiences” (Braun & Clarke, 2012). For this study, I used both inductive and deductive coding, to derive initial themes from the literature and build upon them from the interviews (Fereday & MuirCochrane, 2006). Due to the small sample for expert interviews, I combine the findings with the case study.

The below table is a reference guide for interviews, a full list of participants can be found in the appendix.

	<b>Reference Tag</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Location</b>
Affiliated to WF	A	Chief Programmes Officer	UK
	B	Director and CEO	UK
	C	Youth Leader	Nigeria
	D	Mentoring Consultant	Kenya
	E	Director	Kazakhstan
External Experts	F	Architect and Associate Professor in Urban Design	Sweden
	G	Architect	UK

*Table 2 Reference Codes for Interviews*

## 2.3 ETHICS

Ethical considerations have been taken throughout the study. All secondary data used is available in the public domain. For primary data, all participants have consented to data collection through interviews and were willing to be recorded.

### 3. SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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In this chapter, I discuss findings from the SLR. On the basis of these findings, I will explore current scholarship, further develop concepts and highlight gaps in literature. This review does not include all literature produced on this topic nor does it focus on all varying theories on WE. This review includes literature I identified as being relevant based on my inclusion criteria (section 2.2). A list of literature included in the review can be found in the appendix. From the initial search, I disregarded literature not directly focusing on WE in the SDS or the key concepts of this paper.

#### **WE in Development Settings:**

Conversations around WE have rapidly increased, with the development of the SDGs, where WE has been identified as a primary factor in addressing gender inequality (Eyben, 2011; Ojediran & Anderson, 2020; Panda, 2000). Based on the reviewed literature, this section explores WE within SDSs, from which I will deduce important factors that might be present in ES. Furthermore, this section looks at the role development organizations play in the process of WE.

The concept of empowerment is considered to be abstract and complex, and therefore one which is open to interpretation. However, scholars such as Smita Panda have developed practical characteristics of empowerment which challenge existing inequality and power relations. Panda's study provides key elements line with previous definitions of empowerment. These elements suggest that WE includes: "power, autonomy and self-reliance, entitlement, participation and process of building awareness and capacity" (Panda, 2000).

The development community, however, have found it difficult to measure WE as an end product. Shah, suggests that empowerment is not merely an output, and must be conceptualized as a "multidimensional process" that goes beyond providing women access to resources, and echoes Kabeer's theory that empowerment is subjective and must be explored based on an individual's own experience (Shah, 2011).

Based on the varying interpretations and increasing conversations on WE in SDSs (Panda, 2000; Sehin et al., 2017), it is important to understand the role the development sector itself plays in empowering women.

To explore the role of NGOs in WE, I look at Sehin Et al. who suggest that development organizations play a crucial role in creating access for women to educational and income generating programs, and contribute to their overall well-being, functioning as institutions that give women hope for their future. These institutions then become catalysts for systematic change based on access to information, education, services and role models, creating necessary experiences for women to develop habits needed for empowerment (Sehin et al., 2017).

Building on the role of organizations, Korzh's study shows that NGOs support women with opportunities for empowerment and independence by providing opportunities for labour participation and community organizing. The study highlights that not only do social organizations play a role in empowering women individually but also build their capacity to organize themselves and support each other for collective and individual empowerment beyond the initial intervention (Korzh, 2015).

Supporting these findings, Stromquist found that increasing WE requires external support at the local, national, and regional levels, and women-led organisations have played a key role in facilitating both individual and collective agency. Going on to suggest that based on the lack of support from governments in global south, the importance of NGOs cannot be emphasized enough as they facilitate global gender policies, bring attention to gender inequalities while facilitating funding to tackle them, and tackle structural impediments (Stromquist, 2015).

As important as development organizations have been for WE, studies have also shown shortcomings of organizations in addressing WE. Korzh's suggests that not all NGOs and CBOs create conditions for bottom-up engagement of women. Furthermore, suggesting 'topdown' NGOs, in fact worsen

disadvantages for women by offering “scanty services, practicing deception of CBOs in order to obtain information, and capturing large amount of state funds thereby leaving CBOs without necessary state support” (Korz, 2015).

Similarly, Torrelles’s found that NGOs working on gender programs within the refugee crisis, may fail to promote gender equality and can in fact reinforce inequality. The study also highlights the lack of collaboration between international and local NGOs and other actors which negatively impact the programs. These findings show humanitarian projects do not consistently adopt empowerment approaches, highlighting the need for more holistic, context and culture specific gender transformative programmes embedded in the feminist approach, to challenge inequalities (Torrelles, 2018).

Furthermore, development organizations need to address the gap in assessing the impact of empowerment programs. To better understand the process and analysis of empowerment in the development context, Panda analyzes elements of empowerment and suggests a seven-step process of assessment of WE within a systems framework. The steps look at the “the macroenvironment, the external agency environment, the external agency, the target group environment, the target group, the development project and the integration of the assessment process” (Panda, 2000). Smita proposes these steps can help organizations involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects in understanding, incorporating and assessing WE issues.

From looking at the studies in this section, I deduce the subjective nature and elements of empowerment, the role that NGOs play for WE and the gaps development organizations need to address in their approach towards WE. Going further, I will look at how these aspects are interlinked with the BE and approached by WF.

### **Learning and WE:**

Education is considered a key element of WE, it is seen as one of the most effective means for

reducing inequalities between men and women, and ensures maximum involvement of women during the development process (Mengistie, 2022; Shah, 2011). Hence, this section looks at the importance of education and learning within the empowerment process.

Shah suggests that formal schooling has the potential to support social transformation because it is the largest formal system that, with sufficient support, has the ability to affect the lives of majority of the citizens. Shah argues that education is a critical component of the empowerment process itself, emphasizing the link between education and empowerment. The study, shows how a formal education program, with its social-learning curriculum, can provide the appropriate space to foster all dimensions of empowerment, hence creating a space that confronts the “socio-cultural, historical, and political practices that are at the root of girls’ marginalization” (Shah, 2011). Though studying girl’s education, and not adult literacy, the findings provide valuable insight that can be adaptable to adult programs. The findings are also valuable for this study, as I will be looking into WF which works with both adult women and adolescent girls.

Recognizing the impact of systematic conditions and external organizations on WE, Stromquist explores the role learning plays for WE. She emphasizes the role of Non-Formal Education (NFE) Programs for adult women, describing them as an ‘entry point’ for development agencies to raise awareness on gender issues. Further suggesting that creating SS where women can engage in open questions and discussions, allows them to develop their personal agency, critical reflection and group cohesion enhancing their empowerment. According to the findings of the study, such spaces also allow women to develop social networks where individual experiences can be shared which impact women’s self-confidence, interaction and communication skills and change their behaviors and attitudes. The study goes on to link NFE programs to the knowledge, political, and psychological dimensions, of empowerment, as they increase feelings of self-esteem and provide the skills to participate in public.

Stromquist, however, does highlight that despite the proven link between WE and literacy programs, governments and donor agencies provide very less funding to them as they expect quick results whereas effects of literacy programs only tend to show after several years (Stromquist, 2015).

Building on insights about NFE, research has shown that adult education allows women to exercise agency in their day-to-day life. Echoing Stromquist, Mengistie suggests that adult education programs have the capability for giving women the tools to challenge traditional and patriarchal beliefs and remove themselves from harsh social structures, and are crucial to transforming social practice. However, based on the findings of the study Mengistie suggests that it is important to remember that gaining economic resources does not necessarily mean women have purchasing power for major household purchases or how resources are invested, as compared to day-to-day items for consumption. The research also found that, though participating in such literacy programs did not make women sole decision makers in their family, it did increase their involvement in decision making within the family as compared to before participating in the adult education program (Mengistie, 2022).

The importance of education for capacity building and WE has been echoed in Olagbaju's study looking at Gambia's adult literacy and skill acquisition programmes to empower and make women self-reliant, where the program started to tackle gender based violence, discrimination, low literacy and skills rates. The study also highlights the importance of NFE as compared to formal education institutions due to them being more flexible and able to provide context specific learning. However, the study also highlights some challenges faced by institutions carrying out adult literacy programs which include "inadequate infrastructure, low numbers of graduates, disconnect between the skills taught to the labour market needs, perception of the programme as second option, and inadequate number of scholarships for skill acquisition trainers, teachers, instructors, and students" (Olagbaju, 2020).

As this section highlights, education and learning, both through formal education and adult education programs, have an impact on WE. However, as the studies suggest factors like creation of spaces, funding, effort from governments and donors, disconnect from local culture and factors, to name a few, all impact learning for WE. For this study, the following sections will focus on the first challenge identified by Olagbaju i.e., inadequate infrastructure and BE, and look into its impact on WE within learning spaces and the development sector.

## **BE and Education**

As seen, education is significant for WE, specifically in the global south. Naz Et Al., note that multiple factors that deprive women of the right to education. One of the key factors they explore is physical and infrastructural barriers as major threats to women's education. Not only do they focus on macro physical restrictions like lack of schools and female teachers, they also look at the built features of the existing schools that hinder education. They suggest that the classrooms and schools that are available in the global south often lack basic physical features. Some of the main physical factors they found that played a role in impacting female education include: "Location, transport facilities, Lack of adequate classrooms and availability of books, No availability of library, laboratories and computers, Scarcity of black boards and chairs,

Lack of items such as floor mats, chalk, clean drinking water and, sanitary and water facilities" (Naz et al., 2013). Their study showcases how physical conditions can highly discourage female education, highlighting the importance of BE for women education and their subsequent empowerment.

To counter some of the problems identified by Naz et al., I look at Garrison's study which looks at challenges facing Uganda's rural schools and proposes design solutions promoting regional sustainable design as an example for rural school development. The proposed design aimed to lower carbon footprint by using local materials and passive energy strategies, implement safe and secure building practices, and involved residents in

the design and construction process. The outcome led to Garrison's proposed safe sustainable school design, that would engage and inspire students spatially, these design elements can be found in Figure 2 as a guiding reference and to draw comparison (Garrison, 2014). What is important to

note here is the group's initial research to derive context of Uganda, and their context specific design solutions which can be adapted to other learning spaces in similar areas. Since much of WF's work is in the global south, this gives a reference point for similar work.

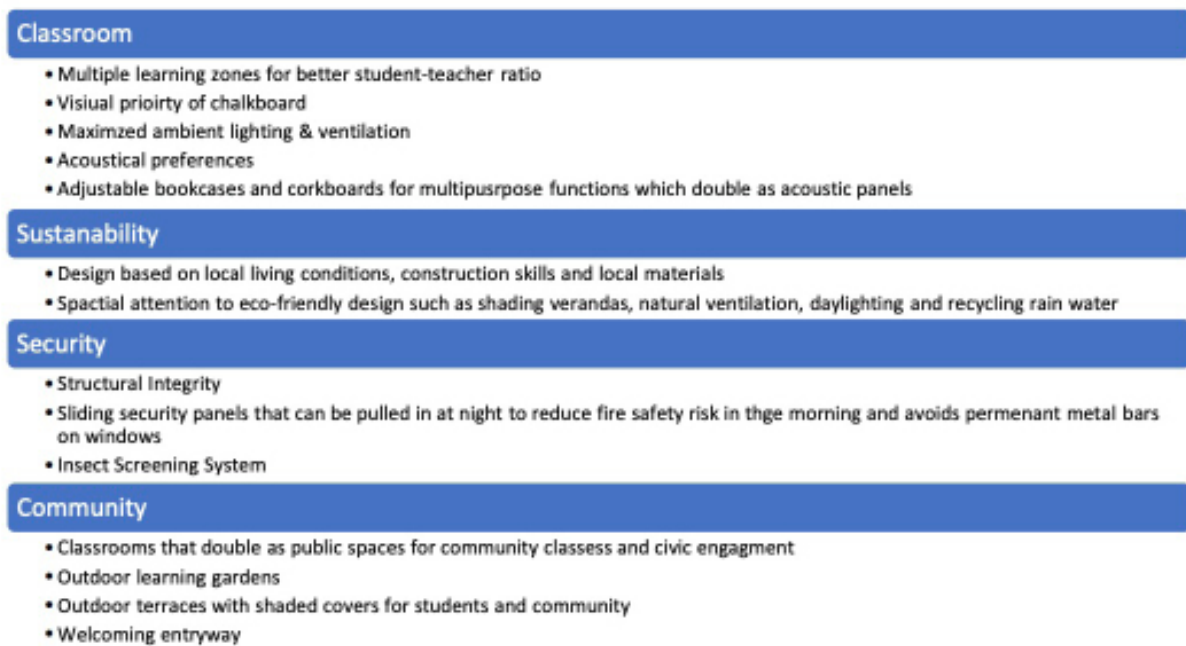


Figure 2: Garrison's Rural School Design (Garrison, 2014)

This section explored elements of BE that impact learning and education spaces and provides potential elements that are important to consider when talking about the intersection of both. Building on this intersection, the coming sections will explore the impact of built spaces on WE before exploring the interlink between BE, WE and learning spaces.

### **Built Environment and WE:**

Daniel suggests that, though WE has become a keystone aspect in international development, design practitioners assisting with projects in the global south do not understand the unique challenges created by gender inequality specifically in the different cultural contexts. She indicates that without the tools needed to understand

gender inequality in the context of built spaces, practitioners may inadvertently reinforce existing obstacles and discrimination for women, reducing the effectiveness of interventions. Highlighting the importance of BE in creating gender inequality, Daniel suggests that by ignoring the disconnect between lived spatial experiences of beneficiaries, and design and planning interventions, based on assumptions of practitioners untrained to see and value gender, we continue the cycle of inequality. As such, looking at the gap in practices of integrating gender equality in the design process and she suggests The Gender-Integrated Design Process (Figure 2) which includes nine steps, and serves as an initial guide for designers and practitioners (Daniel, 2013).



Daniel's proposed checklist can not only act as guidance throughout the design and planning process but can also assist those organizations

who may not have the resources to get additional assistance.

## Daniel's Gender Integrated Design Process Check List

**Design team is gender diverse and familiar with gender-based issues.**

**Do your (gender) homework.**

**Diversify community representation to be gender-balanced.**

**Identify *draft* project goals and program with diverse community representation acknowledging they will be revised.**

**Engage community in participatory research that visibilizes and values gender. Look at the bigger picture beyond the project**

**Sex-disaggregate and document all data, including conversations and observations.**

**Analyze sex-disaggregated data to revise your project goals and program to develop design solutions that address gender inequality.**

**Consider gender in all aspects of project construction, manufacturing, maintenance, and management. Design for women's inclusion and opportunity.**

**Monitor and evaluate your design's impact on gender roles and opportunities over time.**

*Figure 3 Gender-Integrated Design Checklist (Daniel, 2013)*

Whereas Daniel looks at general practices in the development sector, Zakharova looks at the precedents for women's shelters and housing to reflect on how other similar projects can create spaces for women that offer appropriate design solutions to their needs and foster independent living. Zakharova, with her design aimed to: 1) create a sense of control with respect to physical and social surroundings, 2) provide access to social support, and 3) provide access to positive distractions in physical surroundings. Furthermore, based on Delinger's principles Zakharova highlights

the importance of respect and dignity being at the center of healing environments. The study highlights some design elements such as natural light ventilation, need for community spaces, echoing factors laid out by Garrison previously. Overall, she proposes a holistic approach moving away from an institutional top-down model and focusing on trust between the organization and vulnerable women, to create a safe and healing environment (Zakharova, 2022).

Through the studies above, I can deduce the

importance of gender integrated interventions, and outline a gap in development sector practices where, gender integration may be absent in spatial planning. The studies hence propose ways to better integrate gender into development program planning. Following which, the next section will look at the impact gender integration in BE, on WE.

### **WE, Learning & BE in Development Settings:**

As we have seen till now BE has an impact on WE, and development education or literacy programs face multiple challenges in creating spaces which facilitate WE. In this section I look at existing practices and research that look at the impact of BE on WE within SDSs.

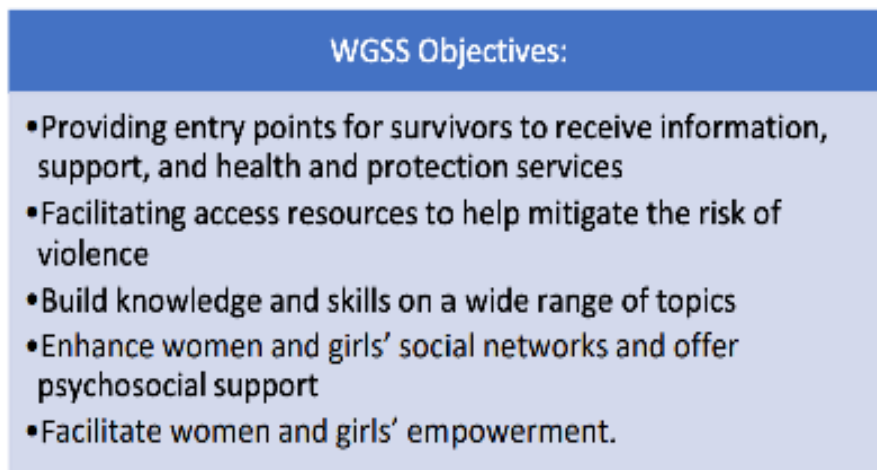
Humanitarian-architecture practices have become an important conversation among design practitioners. Martins et al. study such practices and believe that the processes established by architects are as important as the final output. Their findings suggest that it is important to view humanitarian spaces as not just built structures but “as continuous collective endeavours”. Hence, changing the perception of architecture from an exclusively design-centred activity, towards a more empathic and immersive approach in its relationship with vulnerable individuals, to bring together physical and social changes. Martins et al. also note that practitioners should look into “working within” rather than just addressing an issue, suggesting that by engaging the individuals they are trying to help, and listening to them, practitioners not only understand their immediate, but also long-term needs. By including communities in the process, architects provide the means to enhance members’ autonomy and confidence (Martins et al., 2021).

Looking further into humanitarian architecture, Green’s study shows that emergency shelter research and practices focus more on the physical aspects and specific functions, where the primary purpose is to remove danger when considering a safe and secure environment. She suggests however, that the concept of SS within these shelters is not the same for men and women. Green studies the gendered relationships between space and disasters and

considers what a SS looks like for women, through the lens of the Space syntax theory suggesting that organization of space can impact and give insight into how humans act in specific environments. Green notes that there are functional aspects of spaces that reduce violence, such as lighting, and locking doors, however, there are also social factors to consider, such as cleanliness, cultural awareness, purpose, and sense of belonging, that impact how women experience spaces. She highlights that supporting women requires considering both social and biological needs, which should be considered in spatial planning (Green, 2022).

To tackle concerns in humanitarian design and prevalence of violence against women in humanitarian settings that lead to negative social, economic, health and psychosocial effects on women, development agencies, specifically UN agencies, introduced the WGSS intervention. Looking into WGSS, Stark et al. conclude that though the initiative has become quite popular and has five main objectives (figure 3), aiming to empower women and provide SS, however, not much work has been done to evaluate the effectiveness of WGSS initiatives. Furthermore, Stark et al. found that the initiatives did not reduce violence against women and only showed moderate improvements in well-being and social support, highlighting the need for further exploration into the concept and benefits of WGSS to inform policy and program development (Stark et al., 2021).

Additional shortcomings of WGSS highlighted include, lack of adaptability, inability to evaluate and expand, focus on young girls rather than all age groups excluding a large part of the target population. This shows that the existing practices of SS which overlap with ES are not adequate and need further evolution. However, while looking at other small scale projects the study does note that interventions with educational components and financial literacy were seen to increase beneficial impacts of SS (Stark et al., 2021), showcasing the need to look at empowering learning spaces.



*Figure 4 WGSS Objectives (Stark et al., 2021)*

Looking at spatial planning and WE in the humanitarian sector, Nassim et al. look at the experience of Farsi and Arabic speaking women within the spatiality of initial reception centers of camps. They found that different temporal, architectural, and psychological aspects of these spaces hindered building and strengthening social relations and failed to provide women with adequate protection from violence, while also disregarding cultural notions of privacy and hindering their social freedom and agency. The study as such highlights the importance of integrating gender into spatial planning and more emphasis on women's experience of spaces in order to fully reflect the complex nature of their everyday social reality (Nassim et al., 2021).

**Gaps In Literature:**

Certain gaps have been identified through this review. In terms of education-based projects in SDSs, the focus has been on learning and employment outcomes and rather than WE. Based on the literature I can also see that most work has been done on defining what a safe space would be like and rather than looking into the concept of 'empowering spaces' and if they are the same as SS. Lastly, this thesis builds on literature about each of the concepts that is, BE, WE, and learning, and brings them into conversation with each other to learn how the BE of learning development spaces impact WE, and incorporates the concept of ES for that purpose.

Through the next chapters I will examine existing practice on ES by looking at WF and getting the perspective of design practitioners on the concept. I will then go on to compare those findings with the existing literature we have discussed in this chapter.

## 4. CASE STUDY

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### 4.1 BACKGROUND

Wonder Foundation is a non-profit organization that aims to “transforms the lives of women, girls, and their communities through quality education” (Darby et al., 2022), by providing access to opportunities for quality education, mentoring, technical and soft skills development, and professional and personal development with the goal of helping women and girls break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

WF has adopted the concept of ‘Empowering Spaces’ as one of their core elements, recognizing that “poor infrastructure and unsafe environments can act as direct barriers for women and girl’s education and learning” (Wonder Foundation, 2022). As such, they aim to deliver projects in spaces that empower women and girls, in 17 project locations across the world.

Through their projects WF wants to create communities and futures where women have the ability and empowerment to make informed decisions about their lives and “education is seen as long term investment and solution to societal barriers, training is locally relevant and leads to meaningful employment, where personal growth of women is recognised, and solutions are catered to the local market” leading to sustainable change” (Wonder Foundation, n.d.).

### 4.2 WF LITERATURE ON ES

WF has developed or been part of various studies, conference reports, and policy briefs. This section highlights findings from WF’s literature regarding ES.

As part of their project evaluations and exploration of ES for women learners, WF interviewed teachers from a partner organization, and discussed the importance and benefits of SS for women learners. The report discusses the importance of a safe environment and suggests within a classroom context, SS are where vulnerable women, are free

of any stressors, and their concerns and anxieties are ‘tucked away’ when entering the classroom, to ensure collective psychological wellbeing and avoid potential transference of negative emotions. However, the report goes on to criticize this definition of SS recognizing it as an idealized situation which would undoubtedly be disrupted by the ‘outside world’ (Darby et al., 2019).

In another report, WF highlighted cost, location, timings and the lack of free childcare as potential barriers to migrant women learning English as a second language (ESL). In the case of migrant women, delay in learning ESL delays social integration in society impacting their personal agency, making it imperative to address barriers learners face in accessing ESL classes. WF also emphasizes that meeting others in this learning space boosts women’s confidence, noting the need to include spaces for women to socialise (Wonder Foundation et al., 2021).

Empowering community spaces where women feel safe, and welcome are essential if migrant women are to build relationships and integrate. This highlights the value of community spaces that serve women living in cramped accommodations and on low incomes, who cannot afford access to other safe meeting places. Hence, ES reduce isolation, help women build friendships, practice English and build their confidence and familiarity of host countries so they become aware of their rights, responsibilities, and potential opportunities. WF also notes migrant women’s preference of community spaces over large colleges, where they feel overwhelmed (Darby et al., 2016).

Through multiple accounts present in WF reports from trainees, teachers and partners, its recurring that facilitating SS, encourages women and girls to try new things, which they are hesitant to if they do not feel safe and supported, and think no one is interested in their wellbeing. Furthermore, it is also seen that within an empowering space, observing other women leading, beneficiaries believe they

can do the same, impacting their self-worth. This occurs as in empowering safe space they have the ability to think beyond basic survival (Red:GLOW, 2021).

In terms of the factors that impact empowerment and SS, WF highlights that stringent donor reporting potentially create unwelcoming environments in some situations e.g. when punctuality and attendance targets lead to classroom doors being locked, or stopping latecomers from attending classes, or those with caring responsibilities from participating (Darby et al., 2019).

However, WF continues to highlight the importance of creating spaces where vulnerable women feel safe and welcome – empowering spaces. In one of their evaluations WF found that community centres that created ES and provided additional support for women to overcome barriers, such as child care, were valued by the migrant women more, overcoming their feeling of dislocation (Darby et al., 2016).

WF also recognises the importance of physical built elements of ES in women’s experience. They suggest that architects, interior designers, and psychologists have continuously noted the affect and influence that built space can directly have on health, mood and learning performance, and based on research emphasize a strong relationship between built aspects of classrooms and learning outcomes (Darby et al., 2019).

Further looking at the link between built spaces and learning of their beneficiaries, WF found that a welcoming environment and the atmosphere of the classroom impacts learner retention, progress and motivation. Based on their evaluation, they highlight the importance of a personalised approach and empowering space, which is a space that facilitates students’ with navigating the learning environment, demonstrates respect for students and teachers by being clean and tidy, and allows space for interaction and the development of personal relationships. WF suggests, these aspects of an empowering space increase their learner’s opportunities for self-agency, interaction with others and their confidence

while fostering their social integration (Darby et al., 2019).

Based on WF’s literature, there is a clearly defined need and basis for ES, however, since most of these reports are part of larger projects, not much has been explored in terms of the BE and its impact. Furthermore, this section highlights the importance of ES and SS, and how they impact WF’s beneficiaries. I can also deduce that such spaces are empowering through built and non-built factors that are interconnected. However, the current WF literature does not conceptualize ES and how WF incorporates the concept in their projects, or work towards WE through spatial design. As such, I conducted interviews with WF team members and design experts to better understand processes, define ES, and understand how they utilize BE for WE.

## 4.3 PRIMARY DATA FROM WF AND EXPERT INTERVIEWS

To expand on the aspects that have been discussed in the WF literature above, I wanted to get on-ground perspectives from individuals who work with WF or have partnered with the organization on projects, and design experts working in international development to support or compare to practices and understanding of WF. This following section will look at the onground experiences of individuals linked to WF and design experts, based on which I will expand on the elements highlighted in their reports and will identify answers to my research questions.

### 4.3.1 Results & Findings

This section presents the findings from my interviews with individuals working with WF and design experts. The findings will be presented in accordance with the themes identified through analysis.

Importance of WE and Learning in the Development Setting:

One main theme I identified was the importance of incorporating WE in development projects especially where learning and skills development are involved. This theme echoes scholars looked at previously, on the role of development organizations in WE and providing access to opportunities (Korz, 2015; Sehin et al., 2017; Stromquist, 2015). Similarly, echoing Shah the participants highlighted that WE goes beyond providing opportunities for skills development and economic empowerment (Shah, 2011). The participants focused on the importance of “social-emotional learning” [E], community building and mental health and their impact on vulnerable women’s sense of empowerment and noted that many social projects may not have the resources to focus on these aspects of empowerment.

*“...the thing that really benefited her wasn't just the training, it was the mentoring that she received in fact, that she'd had the ability to grow as a person, and to plan for her future and that she had carried that into her new job...” [A]*

However, interestingly participants highlight the importance of ensuring that joining these projects do not cause ‘more trouble’ for the women at home. Here the participants suggest the need for ‘trauma informed’ and person centered interventions, as vulnerability differs from situation to situation.

In regards, to WF working beyond skills provision, one participant suggests that their beneficiaries have not had any help or guidance and have not felt ‘significant’ in their lives, which is why their programs help women discover their strengths themselves and guide them rather than using a top-down approach.

*“...not being directive not telling people what to do, but about helping people to discover their strengths to discover their dreams, to understand how to put into action to...” [A]*

### **Key Factors of Empowerment:**

Based on their experiences working on ground, key elements of empowerment for vulnerable women were highlighted based on context.

One participant suggested that skills and knowledge,

opportunities, and networks make up empowering opportunities for vulnerable women

*“...It means having the skills, the knowledge, the opportunities and the networks to move forward in life, to have a better life...” [B].*

This is supported by the experts who describe it as one’s ability to make decisions, creating alternatives and removing barriers to agency, stating:

*“...ability to do things differently, and to make a decision concerning one's own life... for me, is also as very much to do with the work of removing barriers and structural barriers to people's agency...For empowerment to happen then alternatives must be seen to exist...” [G].*

Other elements highlighted were well-being (both physical and mental), and political rights in terms of their ability to have a say in the community. Furthermore, participants also suggest the importance of “Self-Leadership” [C], i.e., their readiness to work on themselves, give themselves time and take concrete steps towards their own empowerment. This is supported by design experts who suggest WE is dependent on ‘self-empowerment’ [F], suggesting that empowerment is contextual and reliant on exchange of knowledge and skills between them and the communities.

Participants suggest this is where NGOs and ES come in, to give them the technical and social tools needed to take steps towards their own empowerment.

All the elements in this theme support the multidimensional nature of WE (Panda, 2000; Sehin et al., 2017; Shah, 2011) that was discussed above, and showcases how WF views WE in their projects.

### **Impact of BE on WE and Learning:**

Participants gave multiple perspectives of how spaces impact WE in a development learning setting. Participants state that most vulnerable women have never experienced a ‘good space’ [C, B], and when women come to such spaces it boosts confidence, stating:



*“...they think that I am able to study in a place like this, so it really improves their confidence in themselves, and how they look at themselves because they feel valued...” [D]*

WF believes that BE changes how women experience the project and learning space, and how they receive information. As such, having ES giving them importance and providing a conducive space to learn in, motivates them to implement their learning outside of the project, because they now have the confidence, and the social and technical skills to do so. However, one participant notes the lack of awareness about the importance of spaces, and narrated stories of the lack of consideration of spaces for others and how they experience them.

Participants also highlight that spaces re-enforce stereotypes of NGOs which suggest development spaces are always ‘closed off, poor and dirty’ (E), and note the importance of professional development spaces where projects are carried out on a certain standard. This is not only important for the beneficiaries, to come to spaces the public does not look down on, but also for the individuals who come to work there. Expanding on this sentiment another participant suggests that due to the shame associated with poverty, vulnerable women feel grateful for any standard of space provided by social projects, reinforcing their feelings of worthlessness, but when they are given an ES, it inspires them and gives a sense of achievement. This notion can be linked to the negative impact of NGOs providing “scanty services” (Korzh, 2015).

An interesting observation identified was recognising the ‘burden of mental health among poor women’ [A], and the need to take into account their need to ‘feel safe, welcomed and worthy’ of being in the space for the duration of the project. Within a learning space these feelings directly impact participation and motivation.

Design experts here look at the broader context e.g., how is the space produced and the relationships and actors involved:

*“...how is that space produced so how I would look at the broader set of relationships again that*

*are around that space, looking from sort of the planning and the design and the making of the space, but also how it, how it is used, who is using and how it is managed...” [G].*

This sentiment reinforces the need of embedding WE into project planning.

Considering learning spaces experts suggest that current learning spaces have set hierarchies in mind between teachers and students and note that while designing a learning space a social relationship is being organized. Highlighting the need for spaces to be transformable and mobile as conversations around self-empowerment cannot occur in spaces that are ‘constraining’ and ‘difficult to modify’.

### **Community, Co-Production and Culture:**

WF in practice work primarily with local partners and emphasised the importance of community engagement, co-production of spaces and integrating local culture into the spaces and projects. Participants suggest involving the community, helps with reaching out to people and finding existing spaces for conducting the projects, such as churches. This is important especially for those organizations who lack resources, and in some instances can make women feel more comfortable by being in spaces they are familiar with.

The participants highlighted the benefits of including beneficiaries and communities in developing ES, but noted that it is not always possible, as sometimes, they do not know the beneficiaries and community well. To counter this, some participants suggested making it part of the community outreach efforts, whereas others preferred involving beneficiaries once they have gotten to know the team, through feedback during and after the project. Multiple participants re-iterate the importance of getting needs assessments and feedback, especially where space for cultural or religious activities are involved.

The participants also suggested partnering with external experts from other fields to create a space in collaboration based on expertise and knowledge sharing opportunities with other organizations, like



WF does with their partner organizations.

The importance of keeping in mind cultural architecture was also noted, which at times serves functions other than visual design, such as cooling or lighting, and can be less costly. As such, WF, works with local partners following their input, rather than imposing ideas as they are the ‘experts’ in their culture:

*“...original vernacular architecture might well have much better like cooling properties or airflow qualities or other sustainable things ...I mean there’s a lot to be said about how praising local culture again like helps people to feel that they’re not just always playing catch up with richer Western countries...” [A]*

Similarly, experts suggested that it is important to develop strategic partnerships locally to develop community-based plans

*“...the way we develop this Community action (plan) is in collaboration with the federation which would work in a neighborhood over a period of time...” [G]*

Experts also highlight challenges they face with community engagement as designers since they are always ‘mobile’ and ‘the outsider’, they also note ‘cultural and linguistic’ issues and consideration of power dynamics while engaging with the locals. Re-iterating the need to work with local partners like WF, and they importance of playing a guiding role with minimal influence.

*“...we put in place a set of relationships that we work through and work very much from within...” [G]*

*“...things in a minimal manner or so, I tried to provide design possibilities for certain things to happen, or it was rather on an organizational level, support with technical support...” [F]*

Lastly, experts note that involving the vulnerable groups in the development of space is a form of empowerment:

*“...to be able to do this by yourself and to choose what you wish to have around you I think it’s an issue of empowerment certainly...” [F].*

However, as we learnt from WF, involving women in the production of the space is not always possible.

### **Defining Empowering Spaces:**

Here I explore what can be defined as ES. Participants describe spaces as having the ability to send messages, to the beneficiaries and communities. Hence, according to WF making it imperative, even with a lack of resources, for NGOs to give vulnerable women spaces where they can relax, that is clean, safe, gives them a sense of dignity, is properly built and spacious enough to meet the needs of the people and project. This is crucial as space impacts how women ‘react to the services’ [B] being provided and they need a space that makes them feel proud to be there [B].

These sentiments echo scholars looked at above, highlighting the impact of BE on women education and empowerment, suggesting that inadequate BE re-enforces inequality and obstacles for women and reducing the effectiveness of interventions (Daniel, 2013; Naz et al., 2013)

Based on interviews, I deduce that an empowering space must be holistic and in accordance with the needs of the people and is only empowering to the extent it contributes to the purpose of having the space [C].

However, one participant had a differing view, seeing ES as spaces that organizations create to deliver projects in the ‘right way’ for the duration of the project. This perspective is contradictory to the overall WF narrative.

As a holistic definition however, an empowering space has been defined as a space where individuals can grow, with one participant stating:

*“...ES is about that sense, that ability to grow as a person...and a place where you can come build relationships, where you can have time and space to reflect where you can learn, yeah where you*

*can feel valued and that someone has thought, that this person needs a place where they can develop...” [A]*

Keeping with the need for ES participants iterated the importance of ensuring that such spaces do not make women feel “intimidated or devalue where they come from” [D].

Similarly, design experts suggest that the idea of creating ES is more about “supporting communities”, specifically in having an influence on how their spaces are designed [G].

In terms of defining ES experts echoed WF affiliates in their sentiment that it is based on who will be using the space rather than imposing a specific definition and as such designing based on ability to transform, “...so, to create designs that are open to possibilities that can be appropriated that can be transformed...” [G]

One expert also suggested that ES are those where women can have conversations that they might not be able to have elsewhere stating:

*“...In in many cases, women might not want to have that conversation at home...So how do you generate a space where actually (they are) safe from all of this, and where one can even start thinking remotely of empowerment...” [G]*

#### **Difference between SS and ES:**

In the previous chapter I looked at the concept of SS through Green’s evaluation through the space syntax theory and the WGSS intervention (Green, 2022; Stark et al., 2021). However, WF works on an understanding that a difference exists between safe and empowering spaces.

A general difference that came up between the two was that a space that is safe is not necessarily empowering. Most participants, went on to suggest that being safe is an element of an ES, stating:

*“...that’s not enough, when we are educating, we want a space that is safe, this is the minimum, but it is also empowering that uplifts you...” [B]*

*“... empowering space has a broader aspect than just safety, I would say, safety is an element of empowering space...” [D]*

Elaborating, participants suggest that in SDSs projects are sometimes held in places where things are broken, unclean and appropriate amenities are missing, such a space cannot be defined as empowering, but it might be a safe space in the sense that it is safe from harm [B].

As a consensus, 4 WF participants suggest that SS maintain a ‘minimum standard’ rather than giving women ‘more’ or bettering their situation, where they are empowered.

The experts concurred with the statements by WF in regards to the distinction between SS and ES, suggesting that safety is a part of ES stating:

*“...safe spaces are the prerequisite to be empowering spaces...struggle to imagine how that can be a space of empowerment, that is not safe...” [G].*

However, experts conclude that SS have the capacity to become empowering based on the needs of those using them.

#### **Elements of ES:**

Previously I explored some empowering elements, through Panda’s list of key elements that can be incorporated into empowering learning spaces (Panda, 2000), and looked at literature around the impact of BE on WE. However, these studies do not give specific features that should be present in ES. Based on the response coding, I separate these elements into two categories, namely ‘built’ and ‘un-built’ elements, which are in line with the concept of BE (Hassler & Kohler, 2014).

#### **Built Elements:**

Based on WF responses, 19 physical elements have been identified that they feel should be present in empowering learning spaces. The chart below shows the elements in accordance with the number of coded references to each element.

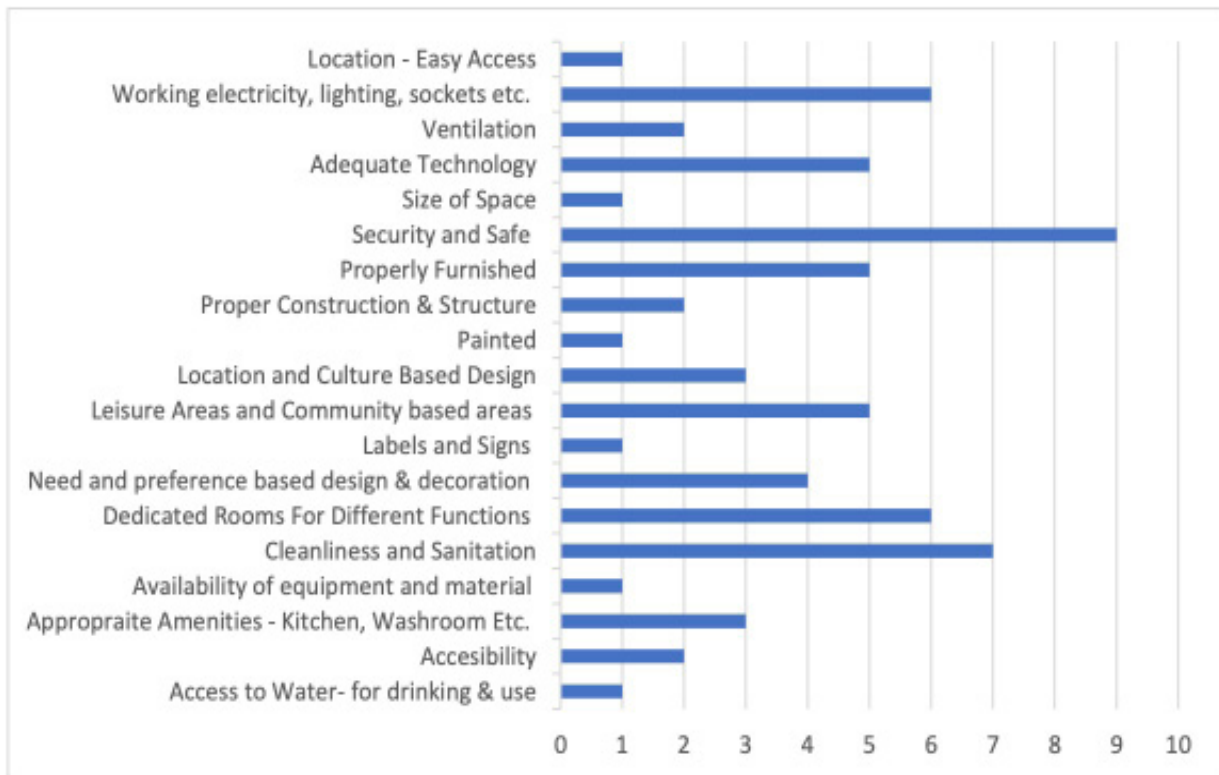


Figure 4 WGSS Objectives (Stark et al., 2021)

Through the analysis, we can see that even though safety is the most important element in an empowering learning space, it is not the only one that needs to be considered while creating ES.

Experts echo the elements identified by WF, and highlight using service design to look at the ‘journey’ of those who will use the space. They emphasize the importance of the impact of those involved in creating the spaces, the cultural elements (need for closed or open spaces) and the need to have a space. In addition, they mentioned a space’s ability to transform as needed as imperative.

#### Un-Built Elements:

In terms of un-built elements of empowering learning spaces, participants noted that ES need be to spaces where women can interact with others and build their community, social network and social capital. One participant notes that ES should not only be physically safe but should make the women ‘feel’ safe and respected, so they want to continue coming back to that space.

One participant suggests that ES should be an escape for vulnerable women stating:

*“...because of the circumstances that they live in there's rarely a time where they actually have any space on their own... there isn't a space that you can escape to and there isn't a quiet place that you can escape...” [A]*

Other un-built elements highlighted include ES’s ability to appropriately accommodate current generations using the space (in terms of modernization), and the space being showing respect for the women coming there.

#### Measuring Impact of ES:

Another theme identified revolved around difficulty measuring the impact of ES and empowerment, echoing the literature (Shah, 2011). According to the participants, measuring empowerment and true happiness is difficult without spending majority of the budget especially in short term projects. However, historical data and feedback were suggested as

potential measurements [C].

*“...the way that they demonstrate impact is by measuring things that are measurable, which is sometimes not the most valuable things to measure, like how to measure the true measure of happiness...you can come up with lots of measures, but they're typically not things that you can easily do quickly in a project without wasting half your budget...” [A]*

### **Project Planning and ES:**

To understand how ES are or can be built into the project planning, I explored the processes of WF. Participants mentioned operating through existing spaces, and but highlight ensuing that those spaces maintain cleanliness, are built solidly, and safe for their students, and re-iterated the importance of other organizations to do so actively rather than saving costs.

Other points highlighted included, ensuring the space is responsive to local needs and architecture, as seen in above themes.

However, one participant mentioned that they currently do not have formal processes when it comes creating ES, but they do consider aspects of ES while planning projects, e.g., ensuring cleanliness, availability of equipment and general upkeep of the facility, stating it is important to budget for such expenses. The participant also states that it is important to raise awareness about ES:

*“...creating that awareness of the importance of ES...I need to justify to people, the fact that the space is important because people think it's like an accessory...” [B]*

One participant suggested they rely on past experience of practitioners and feedback from beneficiaries to ensure that spaces are thought of during projects:

*“...Past experience and also feedback from those in the past and ongoing feedback for those we are working with (in) present...” [C]*

However, to give organizational perspectives, one participant notes that when starting out NGOs are constrained and do not have the capacity to think of ES, rather prioritize reaching the women. Stating:

*“...I don't think that at initial they're thinking of an empowering space for women, I think that what they think about is reaching these women in the first place...” [C]*

Yet, participants re-iterated that practitioners do not consider how spatial aspects can trigger trauma giving the example of colors in a space being triggering.

*“...many people have experienced different traumas and that has an impact, so that has not been considered very much...” [D]*

In conclusion, participants agreed that spatial consideration should be part of project planning and management, whether carried out initially, or through updates and upkeep later on.

### **Organizational Factors Impacting ES:**

The last theme identified, looked at factors that might impact the organization's ability to provide an ES. Through SLR, I identified lack of resources as a factor impacting development of ES, however, through WF's work we can identify specific factors that need to be considered. The below diagram (figure 6) shows 16 factors that were identified.

Similarly, experts highlighted finance, geographical location and easy access as factors impacting an organization's ability to create ES, echoing some of the factors highlighted by WF: “...definitely the lack of financial resources...where they're located and how accessible that might be...” [G]

## **4.5 CONCLUSION**

Through this chapter I study WF and design experts to look at existing practices and perceptions of ES. With WF actively working towards creating and advocating for ES, perspectives their affiliates helped identify themes and factors to answer my research questions. Furthermore, perspectives

of design experts in compliment with WF and the SLR provides holistic responses. Due to the limited participant pool of experts, these views are meant to be complimenting the case study to see if design experts have the same understanding of ES that WF operates on or is further clarification needed between development and design practitioners.

As seen, in most instances, design experts echo sentiments of WF, however, I deduce that more clear understanding needs to be developed between development and design practitioners regarding ES.

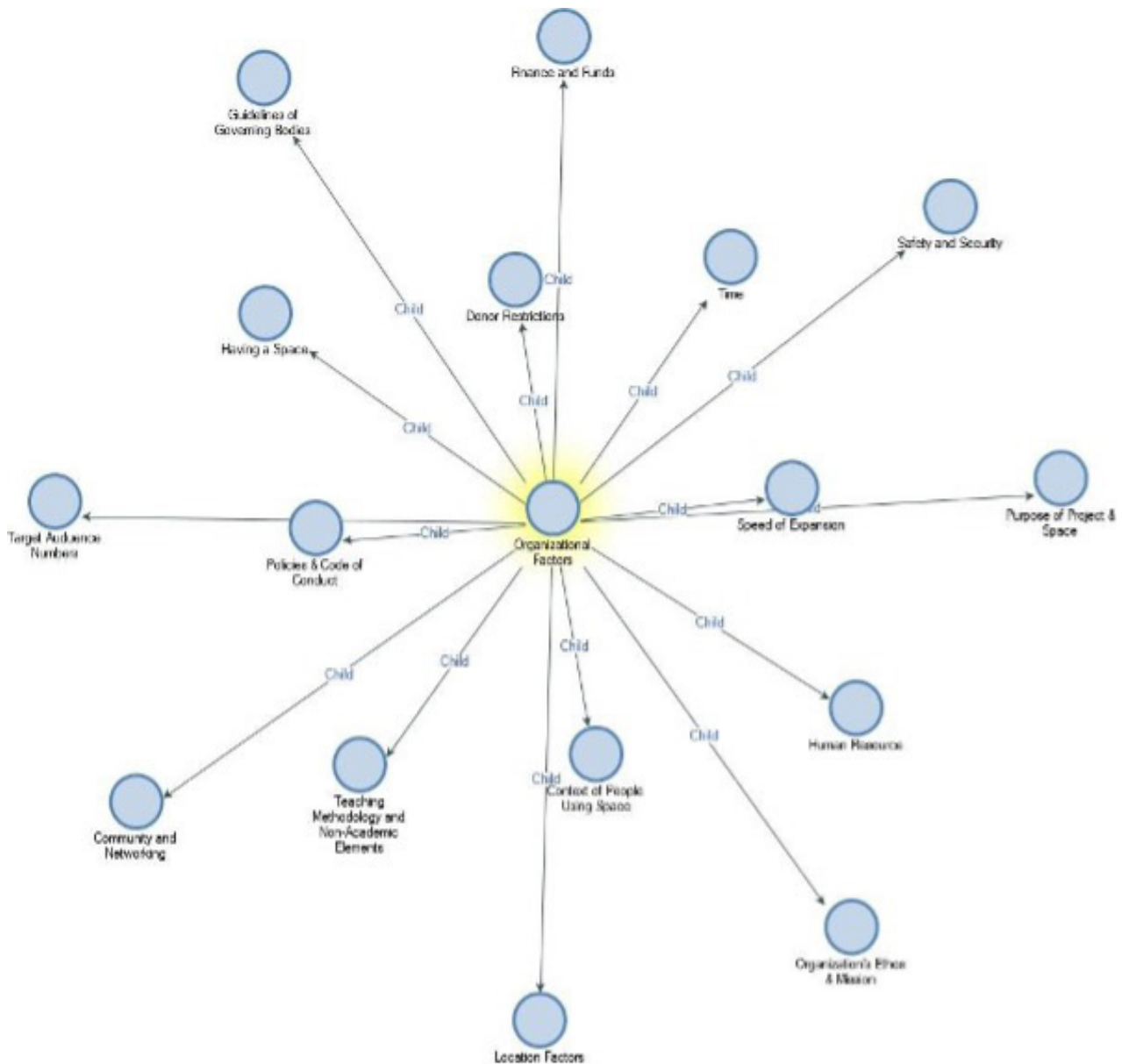


Figure 6- Organizational Factors Impacting ES

## 5. DISCUSSION

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This chapter provides a synthesized analysis of the findings from the research methodologies. The first part of this chapter will look at the findings in relation to existing literature, and the second part will discuss implication of the study and provide recommendations for WF.

In this paper, I have discussed the link between WE and BE of learning spaces within the SDS to explore the concept of ES. I did this by looking at concepts and existing literature and studying an organization that works on ES in their practice and consulting design professionals.

This thesis establishes that empowerment is a complex concept, with multiple definitions evolving from traditional empowerment, focusing on access to resources (Shah, 2011) to including more context specific elements, focusing on well-being, confidence and self-esteem

(Cornwall, 2016). We can see that WF's concept of empowerment is similar to existing literature, with WF focusing on not only education and economic empowerment, but actively working on well-being, mentoring, self-development and access to opportunities & networks [B,C].

Both primary findings and literature have supported the impact of BE on WE, safety and learning, and support the need for more awareness on the impact of BE on WE (Amoo-Adare, 2009). However, some studies have also noted that though BE may have some influence on safety it is more important to look at how women's fear shapes their "understanding, perception and use of space and place" (Koskela & Pain, 2000).

In regards ES, I found a contradiction between ES and SS when looking at the findings from WF and existing literature. Whereas, WF suggests that there is a difference between SS and ES (Red:GLOW, 2021) [B,D,A], literature tends to use the term interchangeably to indicate the concept that WF views as 'empowering space' (Lewis et al., 2015; Mountz, 2017). This is especially true in terms of

WGSS initiatives, which as per its description (Figure 4) overlaps ES and SS in humanitarian settings (Vermehren, 2021). However, as we saw in the literature the true impact of WGSS has been contested (Stark et al., 2021).

I put forth here that SS and ES should at separately, as ES is an evolution of SS focusing on elements beyond physical safety, and beyond the humanitarian and emergency sphere as highlighted by WF. The clarification between the terms would not only help expand its focus from humanitarian and emergency relief but will also serve as an evolution of the concept of BE in SDS, promoting further research on the concept of ES in SDS, and will focus more on its link to the concept of BE and gendered spaces. Here I note that though championing ES, WF currently does not have a definition or standard for ES.

One concept I looked at for this paper, was Social Learning. Both literature and primary data support the connection between social learning and WE, suggesting it balances empowerment with supporting women to function in a patriarchal society (Shah, 2011), with WF emphasizing building relationships in ES and its impact on learning (Darby et al., 2019, 2022; Red:GLOW, 2021).

Impact of NGOs on WE has been supported by both existing literature (Korzsh, 2015; Sehin et al., 2017; Stromquist, 2015) and findings from WF (Darby et al., 2019), however, some studies suggest that Social institutions do not guarantee women equality in "basic legal and human rights, in access to or control of resources, in employment and earning, and social and political participation", and do not enforce development existing policies for structural change, showcasing contradictions among the scholarship (Srivastava, 2009).

In terms of built elements of ES, both literature (Naz et al., 2013) and WF have stated similar elements. WF through their perspective have given more in-depth examples. However, in line with one interviewee's statement on the need to work with experts [D] it

should be noted that WF has not highlighted working with design experts in current practice.

Literature has highlighted importance of incorporating empowerment and gender into the planning process (Daniel, 2013), however, WF while actively focusing on elements of ES, do not have official processes for designing their spaces [B]. This prompts the need for further investigation and more formalized integration of ES in their planning.

This paper also looked at the concept of gendered spaces and how women's experience of such spaces impact them. This concept is supported by Green's explorations of women's spatial experience through the space syntax theory and the conclusion that social and biological needs must be met while planning spaces (Green, 2022). This sentiment is supported through both the interviews with WF and the design experts.

## 5.1 IMPLICATIONS

For the development sector, better defining terminology and creating practices that integrate WE and ES into projects can help practitioners design more holistically, especially with the changing concept of empowerment. Differentiating between SS and ES can also expand the concept of WGSS beyond humanitarian relief and can better the understanding of impact of BE within SDSs for WE.

For organizations, looking at design practices and concepts can help look at impact of empowerment projects beyond the program. For WF, this study helps conceptualize ES and different perceptions across the scholarship and identifies gaps in both literature and practice that they can work towards.

For individual women, understanding ES, BE and their link to WE gives them access to better services, more spaces that cater to their needs and awareness on identifying spaces that empower them rather than being unsupportive and enforcing gendered spaces.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WF

Based on the findings, I recommend WF to look at:

- Defining what ES means for their organization, and adaptations based on location
- Creating formalized processes to integrate ES into project planning
- Carrying out further research on BE's impact on their beneficiaries and looking at further qualitative and quantitative measures of the impact of BE on WE



# 6. CONCLUSION

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## 6.1 KEY HIGHLIGHTS

This thesis studies the impact of BE on WE in SDSs and the concept of ‘empowering spaces’ as its interlink. By adopting a mixed methods approach looking at existing literature and practices, I aimed to answer four research questions that relate empowering learning spaces to WE in SDSs.

Answering the first research question, ES can be defined as spaces which, through BE, provide vulnerable women a space where they are safe, not isolated, can build social relations & capital, provide opportunities for self and skills development, focus on well-being, and making women feel valued and empowered.

When it comes to establishing differentiation between ES and SS, the study shows that ES can be seen as an evolution of SS going beyond physical safety, yet being an integral part of ES for vulnerable women.

To answer the third research question, I established a strong link between education and WE, and the impact of empowering learning spaces on WE. To further explore empowering learning spaces the study provides built and un-built elements that make an empowering learning space, for practitioners to consider while planning learning spaces for vulnerable women.

Lastly, 16 potential factors have been identified, that can impact an organization’s ability to create an ES. Though some factors may be beyond an organization’s control, the factors combined with elements of ES provide a guiding point for innovative practices and potential systematic change.

## 6.2 LIMITATIONS

This thesis encountered some limitations due to its methodology. Firstly, due to time and ethical constraints, this study was not able to explore the perspective of beneficiaries of WF, resulting in the study focusing only on organizational perspectives.

Furthermore, theories of gender identity are beyond the scope of this study and as such not included. The study also focuses on one particular organization, not providing a comparison of on-ground practice. I was also only able to interview 7 individuals, as such results cannot be generalized, but provide a starting point for conceptualizing ‘empowering spaces’ from a development and design perspective.

## 6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the findings and limitations of this thesis, following recommendation can be made for future research:

- Study comparison between current organizations working on the concept of ES
- Larger sample size for experts
- Studying the concept on an industry level
- Further exploring measurement of impact of BE on WE
- Further exploring factors that hinder organization’s ability to create ES
- Formalized design tools for ES similar to the WGSS and formalized systems for organizations to incorporate BE in project planning.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: STUDIES SELECTED FOR SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

S. No	Title	Authors	Year
1	Women's empowerment through NGO interventions: A framework for assessment	Smita Mishra Panda	2000
2	Situating Empowerment: Girls, Education, and Development in Gujarat, India	Payal P. Shah	2011
3	Designing for Gender Equality in the Developing Context: Developing a Gender-Integrated Design Process to Support Designers' Seeing, Process, and Space Making	Ginger Daniel	2013
4	Physical and Infrastructural Obstacles to Women's Education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan	Arab Naz, Umar Daraz and Wasoem Khan	2013
5	Designs for the Global South: a sustainable primary school in Uganda	M. Garrison	2014
6	Spaces of disadvantage, places of hope : Women empowerment, economic emancipation and NGOs in Bogotà slums	Ekaterina Korzh	2015
7	Women's Empowerment and Education: linking knowledge to transformative action	Nelly P. Stromquist	2015
8	Engendering Hope: Women's (Dis)engagement in Change in Afghanistan	Oleksandra Schin, Joellen Coryell and Trac Stewart	2017
9	'Endangering' Traditional Gender Roles: Gender Programming in the Humanitarian Response to the Refugee Crisis in Athens	Sara Torrelles	2018
10	Adult Literacy and Skill Acquisition Programmes as Correlates of Women Empowerment and Self-Reliance in The Gambia	Oladotun Opeoluwa Olagbaju	2020
11	Women-led humanitarian architecture in disaster-prone environments: Learning from the Marielle Franco Community-Design Award	A. Nuno Martins, Liliane Hobeica & Adib Hobeica	2021
12	Spatiality of Social Stress Experienced by Refugee Women in Initial Reception Centers	Mehran Nassim, Abi Jumaá Jinan, Lazaridou Felicia, Foroutan Naika, Heinz Andreas, Kluge Ulrike	2021
13	The Effectiveness of Women and Girls Safe Spaces: A Systematic Review of Evidence to Address Violence Against Women and Girls in Humanitarian Contexts	Lindsay Stark, Mackenzie V. Robinson, Ilana Seff, Alli Gillespie, Jonathan Colarelli, and Debbie Landis	2021
14	How Gender-Mainstreamed Spatial Programming in Emergency Shelters Can Mitigate Gender-Based Violence against Women following Disaster Events	Kerrie Green	2022
15	Exploring women's agency through adult education program in Ethiopia	Tilahun Adamu Mengistie	2022
16	Lifting the 'Invisible' veil through architecture: transitioning unhoused women in North-eastern Ontario through an intersectional lens	Maria Zakharova	2022

# APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

## YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

**Title of Study:** Spaces That Empower Women Learners – The relationship between built environment, empowerment & learning of vulnerable women in development settings

**Department:** Institute for Global Prosperity

**Name and Contact Details of the Researcher(s):** Ismat Zehra Juma, [ismat.juma.21@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ismat.juma.21@ucl.ac.uk)

### 1. Invitation Paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research project as part of the dissertation module in the MSc program in Global Prosperity at UCL. This participant information sheet will enable you to understand the purpose of the research and what participation will involve. Please do take the time to read the following information carefully and ask me if anything is unclear. I remain available to answer any questions. Thank you in advance for your time.

### 2. What is the project's purpose?

The research aims to look at the relationship between urban spaces and empowerment & learning for vulnerable women. The study will explore how vulnerable women who are part of social projects experience the built spaces they are provided to learn in, which may vary in quality due to multiple factors or challenges faced by organizations or practitioners. The research will look into what an 'empowering' learning space looks like and how these spaces impact empowerment of vulnerable women. The review will also look at factors that social and design practitioners consider while planning a space, what they consider as an empowering space and the challenges they face while creating spaces for their beneficiaries.

For this research, I will be working with WONDER Foundation, through UCL's Community Research Initiative (CRIS), and this study is in line with one of their core elements: Empowering Spaces. This core element recognizes the importance of infrastructure and safe environments, as key factors impacting women's education. The findings of the research will hope to aid WONDER Foundation's future projects supporting vulnerable women.

The project's total duration will be of four months, however, interviews will take place in July 2022.

### 3. Why have I been chosen?

The participant has been chosen because they are a social development or design practitioner or researcher who has worked on woman empowerment or inclusion in the international development sphere based on their expertise. The participant may also have been directly or indirectly involved with WONDER Foundation's projects across their target areas working on women empowerment. Each category of participants brings forward an on-ground perspective on the influence of built environment on inclusion or women empowerment and how that can be implemented in the social development sphere.

### 4. Do I have to take part?

Taking part in the study is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet and asked to sign a consent form. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or providing a reason. If you decide to withdraw you will be asked what you wish to happen to the data you have provided up to that point.



### 5. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to participate in a 50 -minute (approx.) online interview via Zoom.

### 6. Will I be recorded and how will the recorded media be used?

Recording of the interview is optional. If you agree, the audio and/or video recordings of the interview made during this research will be used only for analysis purposes. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. Data will be stored in password protected UCL systems and will be deleted after completion of the MSc Dissertation.

### 7. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

I do not foresee any disadvantages or risk in taking part, however, if at any point the participant feels discomfort or distress during the research process, they can terminate their participation.

### 8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will help to shape future research and practice for women empowerment in a social/ international development setting. The research will allow us to identify characteristics of an empowering space from multiple perspectives and give recommendations for organizations and practitioners to keep in mind while planning built spaces for vulnerable women in social/ international development setting. This will not only look at existing factors and practices, in terms of the built environment, in the project planning stage but will also hope to provide recommendations for future projects to ensure creation of an empowering space for women the work with.

Furthermore, the research may also be used by WONDER foundation to inform or guide their future projects aiming to empower vulnerable women.

### 9. What if something goes wrong?

Should you wish to raise a complaint or report an incident following your participation in the project, you can contact the study supervisor Hannah Sender on [Hannah.sender@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:Hannah.sender@ucl.ac.uk). Should you feel that the complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can contact the Chair of the UCL Research Ethics Committee – [ethics@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@ucl.ac.uk).

### 10. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information collected about yourself during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Data can be anonymised on request of the participant.

### 11. Limits to confidentiality

- Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.
- Please note that confidentiality will be maintained as far as it is possible, unless during our conversation I hear anything which makes me worried that someone might be in danger of harm, I might have to inform relevant agencies of this.
- Confidentiality will be respected subject to legal constraints and professional guidelines.
- Confidentiality will be respected unless there are compelling and legitimate reasons for this to be breached. If this was the case we would inform you of any decisions that might limit your confidentiality.
- Confidentiality may be limited and conditional and the researcher has a duty of care to report to the relevant authorities possible harm/danger to the participant or others.

## 12. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The research project will be submitted on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and reviewed by the appropriate persons. Based on the research project a final report will also be submitted to WONDER Foundation for review. I will share the final study with yourself, if desired. If the study is to be published, I will inform you prior to the publication.

## 13. Local Data Protection Privacy Notice

### Notice:

The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk).

This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found in our 'general' privacy notice:

For participants in research studies, click [here](#)

The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices.

The lawful basis that would be used to process your *personal data* will be the performance of a task in the public interest.

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project (5 months). If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk).

## 14. Contact for further information

If you wish to ask for further information, you can contact me or if required the supervisor of this study: Hannah Sender on [Hannah.sender@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:Hannah.sender@ucl.ac.uk). The participant will be given a copy of the information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research study.

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## APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE CONSENT FORM

### CONSENT FORM FOR INTEVIEWS

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

**Title of Study:** Spaces That Empower Women Learners – The relationship between built environment, empowerment & learning of vulnerable women in development

**Name and Contact Details of the Researcher:** Ismat Zehra Juma, [ismat.juma.21@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ismat.juma.21@ucl.ac.uk)

**Name and Contact Details of the Principal Researcher:** Hannah Sender, [hannah.sender@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:hannah.sender@ucl.ac.uk)

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

**I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialling each box below I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes means that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element that I may be deemed ineligible for the study.**

		Tick Box
1.	*I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet for the above study. I have had an opportunity to consider the information and what will be expected of me. I have also had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered to my satisfaction and would like to take part in - an individual interview via online call (Zoom)	
2.	*I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to 4 weeks after interview	
3.	*I consent to participate in the study. I understand that my personal information will be used for the purposes explained to me. I understand that according to data protection legislation, 'public task' will be the lawful basis for processing.	
4.	<p><b>Use of the information for this project only</b></p> <p>*I understand that all personal information will remain confidential unless specified</p> <p>* I understand that anonymity for the final report may be optional for this research. Please select from the following 3 options:            (a) I agree for my real name and role/affiliation to be used in connection with any words I have said or information I have passed on.            (b) I request that my comments are presented anonymously but give permission to connect my role/affiliation with my comments (but not the title of my position)            (c) I request that my comments are presented anonymously with no mention of my role/affiliation..</p> <p>*I understand that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases I may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.</p> <p>*I understand that confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible, unless during our conversation I hear anything which makes me worried that someone might be in danger of harm, I might have to inform relevant agencies of this.</p>	

	<p>*I understand that confidentiality will be respected subject to legal constraints and professional guidelines</p> <p>* I understand that confidentiality will be respected unless there are compelling and legitimate reasons for this to be breached. If this was the case we would inform you of any decision that might limit your confidentiality.</p> <p>* I understand that confidentiality may be limited and conditional given that you have a duty of report to the relevant authorities possible harm/danger to participants or others.</p>	
5.	* I understand that my information may be subject to review by responsible individuals from the University for monitoring and audit purposes.	
6.	*I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. I understand that if I decide to withdraw, any personal data I have provided up to that point will be deleted unless I agree otherwise.	
7.	I understand the potential risks of participating and the support that will be available to me should I become distressed during the course of the research.	
8.	I understand the direct/indirect benefits of participating.	
9.	I understand that the data will not be made available to any commercial organisations but is solely the responsibility of the researcher(s) undertaking this study	
10.	I understand that I will not benefit financially from this study or from any possible outcome it may result in in the future.	
11.	I understand that the information I have submitted will be published as a report and I wish to receive a copy of it. Yes/No	
12.	<p>I consent to my interview being audio/video recorded and understand that the recordings will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- destroyed within 2 months after the data has been collected or following transcription</li> </ul> <p>To note: If you do not want your participation recorded you can still take part in the study.</p>	
13.	I hereby confirm that I understand the inclusion criteria as detailed in the Information Sheet and explained to me by the researcher.	
14.	I am aware of who I should contact if I wish to lodge a complaint.	
15.	I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.	
16.	Use of information for this project and beyond. Any personal data recorded will be deleted after the completion of the study.	

**If you would like your contact details to be retained so that you can be contacted in the future by UCL researchers who would like to invite you to participate in follow up studies to this project, or in future studies of a similar nature, please tick the appropriate box below.**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, I would be happy to be contacted in this way	
<input type="checkbox"/>	No, I would not like to be contacted	

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 4 – INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

		Reference Tag	Organization	Designation	Category	Gender	Location
Affiliated to WONDER Foundation	1	A	WONDER Foundation	Chief Programmes Officer	Employee	Female	UK
	2	B	Baytree Centre & WONDER Foundation	Director and Baytree and CEO of Wonder Foundation	CEO + Partner Organization	Female	UK
	3	C	Wonder Foundation	Youth Leader	Community Worker	Female	Nigeria
	4	D	WONDER Foundation	Mentoring Consultant - Africa	Employee	Female	Kenya
	5	E	Kazakhstan Foundation for Cultural Social and Educational Development (KFCSED)	Director	Partner Organization	Female	Kazakhstan
External Experts	6	F	KTH School of Architecture	Architect + Associate Professor in Urban Design and Urban Theory	External Expert	Female	Sweden
	7	G	Designing Inclusion + Architecture Sans Frontières – UK	Architect	External Expert	Female	UK

## APPENDIX 5 INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

Please note that this list of questions will only serve as a guide during the interview. As mentioned previously, this interview is intended to be semi-structured, and I am hoping to have an open conversation. I have also divided them based on themes so you can also think of the conversation on that basis instead of specific questions. Feel free to contact me if you have any queries regarding this guide.

### **Interview Questions:**

#### **Experience:**

- Could you describe your experience specifically working with built environments and social development?
- In what capacity have you worked with vulnerable groups before?

#### **Empowerment:**

- What do you think of when we talk about empowerment of vulnerable groups specifically vulnerable women?
- What do you think empowerment means specifically to vulnerable women? (May be eliminated based on interviewee)

#### **Women Empowerment and Built Spaces:**

- How do you think spaces specifically built spaces impacts empowerment for vulnerable women?
- Do you think the built structure or aspects of such spaces have an impact on women empowerment? If so, how?
- What would you define as an 'empowering space'?
- Do you think empowering space differs from a 'safe space'? If so, how?
- How does Women empower link to the concept or theoretical framework of Humanitarian Architecture?

**Learning, Empowerment and Built Spaces:**

- What role do you think education/ learning (formal or informal) play in impacting women's sense of empowerment? (May be eliminated based on interviewee)
- What role do you think the built environment plays in impacting women's learning specifically in a social development context?
- Have you ever worked on women education in a social development context? And if so, what factors did you keep in mind while creating a space for them?

**Factors and practices impacting 'Empowering Spaces':**

- As a social organization/ practitioner/ designer/, what factors do you keep in mind while planning an empowering space?
- What factors do you think impact an organizations or practitioner's ability to create an empowering and safe space?
- Do you feel space planning should be an important factor in project planning? If so, why?
- How do you feel space planning can be incorporated in project planning (in a development context) as a standard practice?
- What best practices do you think can be considered regarding planning built spaces for vulnerable women?
- Would you recommend any specific resources/ standards / guides to social organizations to look at while planning spaces?
- What suggestions can you give to organizations that lack resources to create empowering spaces? Retrofitting? Alternative methods?

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Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries.



## APPENDIX 6 – SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT

Interviewer : Perfect um, so I do have a list of questions uh However, I do want this to be a more open conversation, so I will take it as a semi structured interview, rather than a very structured question answer um right so first of all, why don't you start off by telling me a bit about wonder foundation and what it is.

Participant : yeah, so WONDER foundation is a women's education charity based in the UK.

Participant: That works to lift vulnerable women and girls out of poverty or more concretely to give them the tools to lift themselves out of poverty, and we do this mainly through partnering with locally led organizations in different places, so both in Europe, where the majority of our work is with migrant women and girls and.

Participant: and also in Africa, Asia, Latin America, where a lot of our work is around vocational training, but you know quality of vocational training that leads to recognized qualifications that leads into decent jobs which is really important.

Interviewer: Right so just to follow up with that there is a description on your website and we have had conversations before, but if you could just define what the organization or within your programs you guys see or take as vulnerable women.

Participant: Oh interesting um.

Participant: I think it's something we haven't.

Participant: let's say they put firm boundaries around, and I think the reason for that is that.

Participant: I would say it's something that we're very conscious of is trauma informed practice and it's not something that necessarily all of our partners have there yet, but I would say that the.

Participant: Even if they don't understand.

Participant: Their work as being trauma informed

practice the methodology of a person centred approach and assets based approach rather than a deficit kind of based approach is something that is involved in their work, and I think From that perspective, you know vulnerability is very much.

Participant: A very broad term, and I think it needs to be a broad term any of us can be vulnerable at

Participant: A particular point in time, and we could be vulnerable at some point every day in the depending on the choices that we make, and the freedom, we have to make those choices, and I would say, you know at the focus of what we do.

Participant: Is the mentoring, that is part of our programs, and which is very much for us about not being directive not telling people what to do, but about helping people to discover their strengths to discover their dreams, to understand how to put into action to.

Participant: You know trauma affects people's ability to make good decisions because it affects executive function, we know this, because this is what the experts tell us this is.

Participant: The methodology we use is based on evidence from the Harvard centre for the developing child and so, even if you do have a dream and, of course, to be able to dream requires space, it requires space, it requires safety requires the fact that you even know that someone else has achieved something, and it could be possible.

Participant: To be able to transfer that into concrete steps towards achieving, it is something that you know many people don't know how to do, and you don't have to be particularly vulnerable to not know how to work towards a goal and And then concretely when it comes to the executive function, it is about you are you able to actually turn that goal into action.

And post, that is a function of the way your brain functions or doesn't function, based upon you know your your past experience and positive is, of course, being surrounded by the people who can assist you feeling able to ask for help.

Participant: And, which for many of the women and girls that we we work with no one's really been available to them to help them or to aid them or to guide them they haven't felt significant in their lives, so for all of that kind of everyone is potentially Vulnerable the majority of people who are in our projects are obviously vulnerable and, if you look at our projects in Nigeria.

Participant: Probably 30% of the young women who were involved in them have been in what we would see as a modern slavery type situation and we were kind of forced child Labour something like that, before they've entered our programs and A lot of people are in very, of the of the adult women that I say are in quite unstable.

Participant: yeah unstable kind of socially expected relationships, where they may well experienced violence coercion like whether it's social or from their husband, one of the issues might be that he refuses to marry her, despite the fact she wants to be denies her her rights and even though they have three children together and she's feeding him every day, and so on, so forth, you know.

Participant : yeah, the the situations that we see as vulnerability are very typically real the migrants that we're working with are typically obviously vulnerable, you know they don't speak the local language, they're struggling to become you know economically, You know, confident and providing for their families that say on a day to day basis, and I, and I would say, a running theme through our work.

Participant: Is that poverty makes people feel in poverty makes people feel vulnerable as far as question of are you vulnerable like there is no tick tick right, it makes people feel vulnerable, to make people feel and feel that they're not valued and feel that they are not valuable and.

Participant: One of the most impressive things that i've experienced in the last year has actually been been with our partners in in the Ivory Coast in Nigeria in Kenya.

Participant : And, seeing that what the girls tell you about all the women tell you about their involvement

in the project hasn't been, yes, you know I came in I didn't have this, and now I have this you know, before I couldn't afford X and now my income has improved three times it's the fact that they walk in and they know they are valuable that there is something missing in the world if they're not in the world and.

Participant : I think you know if you've never really grown up surrounded by love and I think it's not, their parents don't love them, I mean for sure that's in the case, but it's more, that maybe they haven't had time for their children because they've been so busy just trying to survive and they haven't translated, the fact that they're only doing all these things for the children because they love their children into the fact that that child doesn't feel and that's really tough to feel that you just exist.

Interviewer: That also perfectly fits into my next question.

Interviewer: Would you, Based on your current description and what the second half of your response, would you say that this feeling of being valued or feeling that your existent existence essentially matters is part of what you would consider empowerment of these women.

Participant: I think it's um I mean I don't know in a hierarchy I would say that potentially is the most important thing.

Participant: I think if you don't think that there's a purpose in your existence if you don't think that anyone would miss you if you And if you don't feel that I mean I think people fundamentally are relational like we get our sense of purpose and value.

Participant : In the fact that we love others and we are loved that we are contributing, and we are creating and someone is appreciating our, to we're seeing impact of that, and you know we don't get a sense of fulfilment in the most part, for having fed ourselves each day, and you know, tomorrow I wake up and I feed myself again, you know, it is because someone else notices on my part of have some family or friendship, or you know that gives us that

sense and I think that's really fundamental to feel significant is what in general gives us a sense of yeah of fulfilment and of wellbeing and.

Participant: You can't force somebody to love somebody but you know it is through I think service to others and feeling that we are Creating more beauty and joy around us that we actually get a sense of fulfilment so I don't know if that answers the question, I can't remember what the question was

Interviewer: That's fine.

Interviewer : I just also kind of wanted to ask my next question with this, so I would want to ask what do you, based on you speaking to women, and all the work that you've done right, what do you think empowerment means to this these women, I understand that it may mean something completely different to everybody, but considering that you know we want to define it, somehow what empowerment is.

Interviewer: What do you think it means to these women.

Participant: I wish I can tell you a couple of stories I think that's probably the best way of explaining and from when I was in, yeah I'll tell you a couple of stories.

Participant: When I asked some of the women in the project and what would have been the value of the training to them.

Participant: They the things that they told me, I was expecting you know my incomes increased the things I just told you, you know main concern is this that the other, no the things that they said were.

Participant: Like they take it for granted that of course they'd come to the training, with the intention of increasing their income.

Participant : But the thing that had been transformative for them have been the fact that you know, one of them and said, you know I I felt that I was failing as a parent but didn't know how to parent my children

I didn't know how to How to even consider starting to compare them better because you know she's grown up in a family, where she hadn't been well parented.

Participant: For her as a mom who wanted her children to have a better circumstance than she'd grown up in, that was truly empowering.

Participant: For her to feel that she actually be, had the headspace and the tools, because the training didn't just offer her the income generation, which then gave her this little breathing space, But it also kind of gave her training in human rights, life skills and you know some very practical things was the fact that she felt she could be a better mum.

Participant : That was the thing that transformed her life, and another one of them was a lady who had gone blind she wasn't 100% blind, but she had actually had quite a reasonable job, and she had lost a lot of her sight and, of course, in that environment, with no help from the state this and she wasn't married, this was like a really bad circumstance, she had no children and It was the fact that she had hope she had she had skills, yes, she had hope and and she gained a sense of community from that training and.

Participant: You know and she's been able to start a business, like all of these were like amazing things that, she had hope but fundamentally was the thing that made her feel empowered and and you know what i'm saying one of the questions that I asked them was you know, would you.

Participant: Would you recommend this training to any any of your friends.

Participant: And she just said, look at me anyone can see i'm a completely transformed woman before I was, I had no hope and now I you know, look at me, I am amazing.

I think you know that's such a beautiful thing to hear, another lady was there, she was

expecting her seventh baby she arrived in country as a refugee and she was just over the moon and

she was so happy to be having another child she was so happy that she had started the business.

Participant: She was so happy that, it as part of the training she'd been given the tools, also to communicate better with her husband, because, of course, if you can't and you give women training, it can actually lead them to have more more problems if the husband is making their life more difficult than you know alleviating it because of the training and.

Participant : You know, it was again it was that sense of hope that she had like this economic stability, she had this economic plan, but she also improved her relationship with her husband and her ability to parent, and that was something that, for her as the woman who didn't actually speak much French, she wasn't actually terribly literate, but she had managed to build a shop and she had managed to buy a little bit of land to build a house was something that she couldn't have dreamt of and.

Participant: And yeah, so I think those are quite.

Participant: Typical stories and I would say another another one.

Participant : Valentina in Kenya, I remember one of the things that really profoundly touched me, she was a girl who'd come from very poor family and many, many problems and and when I met her, she graduated from our programming in Kenya and she was working as a manager in a bar actually, but it was a quite a fancy bar, she was you know you would look at her and you would see a really professional woman, And you would never have imagined all of the things that she'd face growing up.

Participant : And she had said, you know, the thing that has really benefited her wasn't just the training, was the mentoring that she received in fact that she'd had the ability to grow as a person, And to plan for her future and that she had carried that into her new job, and she mentored now the the women that she met managed and I think it is that female sense of of Not just me being empowered like I am an empowered woman, but the fact that you're carrying a torch.

Participant: And that you value something so much that you want to pass it on to someone else.

Interviewer: Right, yeah that was those were really good situations that you define and you told me that we could definitely get some aspects of what it is that means to them to be empowered.

Interviewer: And speaking of how you mentioned that their families might, you have to be careful of the fact that their families don't make it make the situation worse for them.

Interviewer: By coming to these trainings.

Interviewer: So, would you say that these trainings provide them a space away from their issues or you know, whatever circumstance they're in.

Participant: Yes, yes, I mean I think that's where the projects should be a space of of calm, I mean you can't learn in a place where you don't feel calm, where you feel threatened and.

Participant: And I think For lots of our women because of the circumstances that they live in there's rarely a time where they actually have any space on their own.

Participant: whether it's like physically on their own, or just to sit in peace because there isn't a space that you can escape to and there isn't a quiet place that you can escape.

Interviewer: All right, um so i'm going to ask you to make a distinction between a safe space and an empowering space in your experience what could be the difference between the two.

Participant: Okay um.

Participant : I think, often like the physiology of a safe space is something that is it's about maintaining a minimum standard, you know that you have safe spaces in a refugee camp where they know that even in the middle of the day, women might be raped, you know it's not about giving women more or raising that situation, it is about maintaining the most basic minimum standard that women should

be able to expect. you should be, it is not Enough you should be able to go about your daily life and not be attacked.

Participant: And you know, I think, That is it's not a good thing to give a woman, a safe space, because it should be always that you are safe and I think for me an empowering space is somewhere where you can grow as a person, you know If you come off a street and it's violent and you're scared.

Participant: In that moment, you might not be being attacked but you'll find yourself panicking , and you know you're going to go out into that space again and it's you know you're going to face problems, again, I think.

Participant : An empowering space is about, it is about that sense that ability to grow as a person is about that and a place where you can you can come where you can build relationships, where you can have time and space to reflect where you can learn where you can, yeah where you can feel valued and that someone has thought That you yeah that someone has thought you know this person needs a place where they can develop.

Participant : And I think you know, we see that in schools that you know you give, you have schools which give the minimum to children and how schools that really seek to inspire children, And let's, seek to give them the resources they could have a seat to raise the aspirations and I think, in that sense of safe space versus and empowering spaces it's the same thing, as you know, a school that aspires that someone at the age of 10 to Read and a school that aspires someone at the age of 10 is able to have you know Think critically, and you know what is our what is the aspiration that we have for women is it simply that.

Participant : You know we're not attacked or is it that, actually, we need to be given the tools and one of the fundamental tools is space space to think, space to breathe space to learn, space to study, which for many of the girls that we work with like, where do you study you know you have no study space at home, you may not have electricity or you

have power out all of time.

Participant : You may not have a desk you're living in two rooms one room with your entire family, You know there's noise outside all the time if you're in the House someone's expecting you to do chores you know you need to give people space to study, if they're actually going to learn anything, And yeah that we allow women to have the physical spaces that they need in order to develop that potential.

Interviewer: Right um.

Interviewer: So and correct me if i'm wrong, so the connection i'm making here is that how.

Interviewer: Learning leads to empowerment and how you can provide basis to accommodate both of those things together.

Participant: I think learning leads to empowerment, but relationships and the space that we provide also lead empowerment, Even if you're not doing formal learning in that space, because you could be doing informal non formal learning in that space.

Participant: Because I think shame is such a huge part of poverty, you know you're you feel that you failed by being poor

Participant : And everyone tells you that you failed by being poor whether it's the media, whether it's other people in society they look down on you, they treat you differently, for being poor and part of that treating differently, is this this this kind of universal thing, which is that you know well you're poor, you should be grateful, you have anything And it's just confirms the shame that you have yourself, it confirms the suspicion that you have you're not particularly valuable and that your your your life is worth less than other people's lives and.

To just even to invite people into a space like I can think of spaces that i've been in you

know you walk into some amazing space and it's inspiring.

Participant: You know if beauty is inspiring and i'm

not saying that you know the spaces, that we have have to be you know beautiful they don't have to be Notre Dame they don't have to be you know, the natural history museum or whatever, but that they can show people something beautiful something better than the circumstances are there in obviously often not very beautiful at all and.

Participant: And that part of being empowered is also, I think, for women often we don't have the time, Particularly poor women to form to build social capital and good space and I think this is something here, we see in University in the way that men build connections and women don't.

Participant: You know, building connections takes time and it's also a function of being in spaces, where you can do that, If you're always surrounded with your children your ability to have adult conversations is very limited, You know you don't have the opportunity to build that connection have that conversation that will lead you to.

Participant: achieve that thing or to know that something is happening or to take advantage of an opportunity so space can perform all of these different functions, it can make you feel good.

Participant: And feeling good leads you to have a different outlook, it can lead you to know people in different ways, or to meet people that also makes you feel good but also leads to us to social capital and.

Participant: Developing opportunities and it's a really important function of course of studying of reflection to have quiet safe, good spaces, where you can learn and study.

Interviewer: um so again it differs and it doesn't need to be very grand but what would you say, are some of the characteristics, the built characteristics that should be there in an empowering space.

Participant: This is a good question I would I would say, It it doesn't have to be particularly luxurious I mean we all love to be somewhere nice right and.

Participant: But it has to be clean, I think you know

cleanliness is something that is a sign of respect for people and you've made the effort for it to be nice for them, and you know hygiene is a very important message to people, you know.

Participant : They deserve cleanliness and, I think in good condition, and I think there's there's two reasons for that, I mean one is that places in good condition are simply nicer places to be in, the second is as well is is about You know where is the sustainability and doing something badly, what is the message that you're sending to people about the long term goals that you have for their Community if you know if you do stuff badly.

Participant: And I think there's a lot, there will always be cultural things to be taken into consideration, around what a good space doesn't doesn't look like you know.

Participant: We know that was certain building materials in certain places they they indicate social status or they indicate something else, or there may be, you know religious considerations or whatever around.

Participant: What should or shouldn't be in a building and I think that is also that that sign of respect to people, you know that you really considered what will make them feel comfortable at home.

Participant: yeah.

Interviewer : that's interesting that you brought up the cultural differences, because that was also one of the questions I was going to ask how do you keep, how do you when you're planning a space right um so i'll just mix two questions into this a) how do when you guys are starting up a program In a new area, how do you go about finding or building such a space and b), how do you factor in the cultural differences that are in that area.

That's a really good question and it's one in a way, I can't really answer other than

saying, because our partners are locally lead so wouldn't be us there designing the space.

Participant: For them it's up to them to design the space for themselves.

Participant: But I think it is one of those challenges, it is one of those challenges that.

Participant: You know I think one of the things we always know is that funders are often reluctant to give money for building work

Participant: And there's obviously there's been a lot of white elephant building projects in international development that have led people to be very, very reluctant to.

Participant: do things, and you know, of course, they want a lot they want bang for their buck, they want to know the money's being well spent.

Participant: And so they may put restrictions on what can and can't be built or how it should we build all the timeframes that they see as being you know part of that and, and I think you see it as as well and kind of architectural practice that there are some really great.

Participant: In there are some really, Great local building traditions that have often been superseded by or replaced by you know quick more than, Chief building materials.

Participant : You know Everywhere you go in Africa, you see the same, Quick concrete construction and that doesn't mean to say that, like actually the original vernacular architecture might well have much better like cooling properties or airflow qualities or other sustainable things we're using local materials and yeah I mean there's a lot to be said about how praising local culture again like helps people to feel that they're not just always playing catch up with with richer Western countries and.

Participant: But.

Participant: I don't know if that's a good answer

Interviewer: No no, its Good, so based on your work with your local partners right um because i'm sure they've given project reports or some feedback

or information from what they're doing right, so what factors, do you think they keep in mind, while planning space.

Interviewer: Other than maybe lets say the material.

Participant: I think I mean a lot of it is around cost and longevity.

Participant: You know that it needs to be a space that is going to last, and that was that something that we'd be very keen that.

Participant: Our partners considered, you know that they build something the last like it's always better to do it well once, then you know these cheap constructions that you're constantly replacing.

Participant: And to really think about the use of that space like, how is it going to be a multipurpose space how's it going to make people feel comfortable and.

Participant: You know what does comfort and planning is like I think that's another thing is, you know different weather means cleanliness is going to come in different ways.

Participant: yeah and yeah and I think you do have to you have to think about the materials that last in in that circumstance in that weather yeah.

Interviewer: So, like you mentioned there's the cost and then there's the longevity and all of that right, so do you think at times that.

Interviewer: The creation of an empowering space um could be in conflict with those factors and how would you overcome that.

I mean, I think I think it really depends on the ethos of the organization and if you see that.

Participant: There isn't much point in having a space that isn't empowering then you're going to make sure that that's always part of your goal and.

Participant: You know I think it's, I saw a video earlier today totally different topic, but you know it was



it was an African guy saying you know Western charities you tell.

Participant: You know these poverty porn stories, because you know it, it makes money for your work and you need money to do work with poor Africans, but like these stories are hurting us.

Participant: And I think it is that that thing it's like what is it what are you trying to achieve you know what is the point of doing an education project that makes people leave feeling small.

Participant: You know.

Participant: Our purpose and our goal is not to educate people in we are an education charity, but our purpose in life is not just to give someone a piece of paper or a certificate.

Participant: Like we all have pieces of paper and certificates and we never looked at again.

Participant: You know it's.

Participant: The lasting impact is what that woman feels about herself, the hope that she has inside of herself her ability to look for the next opportunity to collaborate with others and to contribute and her family and her Community that's the lasting impact and there's no point in achieving.

Participant: One of those things if you were actually negatively affecting the rest of her.

Participant: Her sense of who she is, I think you do see that quite a lot in in education projects, you know where.

Participant : You know I remember visiting university, was so dispiriting you know so, That as a girl if you wanted to go to the toilet, The floor was a foot deep in overflowed sewage, let's say six inches I mean what does that tell you about your value or, How does that encourage you to persevere in your studies and you know what does it tell you, as a young woman, if you can get good grades, but only if you sleep with your professor and you're going to graduate but at what cost.

Participant: I don't know if that gives you a reasonable answer is.

Interviewer: No, no, it does it does definitely um and speaking of building it into the ethos of the organization right.

Interviewer: So empowering spaces, is obviously one of the core elements for wonder foundation, however.

Interviewer : It is not something that a lot of organizations may think of right um so what What would you recommend or suggest To do to make that like a standard practice or build it into the project planning phase so it's not something that people have to think about separately and it's rather just a given to create such a space for women, rather than people thinking of it as something completely different.

Participant: It is a hard one isn't it, I think you know we recognize this at let's say international development practitioners recognize that co-production is a good thing.

Participant: But the question is, what are they actually trying to co-produce you know, are you trying to co-produce a curriculum, are you trying to co-produce a project plan are you trying to co-produce a space.

Participant: You know why do you see the end of your project be like is the end of your project, that we're offering two hours of training, that's all project, the two hours of training, or is the project.

The fuzzy edges, you know that mean that the women are coming and that you see that

moment, they have together before the class or the Tea that they share in the middle of the class or that time where the hangout after the class as a natural part of that that same project and.

Participant: You know, is it about having narrow measurable ultra-measurable outcomes, I mean that You can tick easily, because the the outcomes of women having tea together are going to be very difficult to measure you can measure, did you enjoy

the tea yes.

Participant : Did you make a new friend, yes, no but you're never going to be able to measure in the life cycle of a project, you know are your kids still playing together in five years time.

Participant : You know, did you go into business together in five years time, are you sharing information, are you doing this that the other, which is the things that actually make people function makes our lives good you know, are you babysitting each other's children.

Participant: And I think that you know that's always part of the challenge of of these types of projects is that people do want to demonstrate impact.

Participant : And the way that they demonstrate impact is by measuring things that are measurable, which is sometimes not the most valuable valuable things to measure, like how to measure the true measure of happiness or in these things, and you can come up with lots of measures, but they're typically not things that you can easily do quickly in a project without wasting half your budget on your measurement so.

Participant: You know, I think it is it but part of it, it is the other side of it is thinking what is a person like what are we trying to achieve and.

Participant: Again in like being accountable so often about numbers it's a numbers game, and I think it can be quite dehumanizing to typically poor women.

Participant: Who, we want to push into a better circumstance and it takes that agency away from them, it takes the individual individuality.

Participant: away from them, you know, like a Pakistani woman is a woman is Pakistani woman like you know you don't when you say we're helping hundred thousand women you're not thinking well this woman loves music.

Participant: And this one is really shy, and this one loves dancing and this one's actually a genius in math you know if only she had the education you're

just thinking, like every woman, I teach catering bead making you know this particular thing, if I give her X, you will achieve Y

Participant : And I think it's An empowering space is that space where you can be a person, you know you can be you know Jane who loves math and petunia who loves, You know flower arranging and this other person who is just brilliant with people and makes everyone happy around her and you can't be that person, if your goal is simply to be in a classroom and, at the end of six weeks to get the certificate or not, and if you haven't got the certificate.

Participant: You failed and the project has failed.

Participant: You may never get that certificate, but that doesn't mean to say that, by being in this space you won't have achieved something or contributed something amazing.

Interviewer: And again connecting it to what you had said earlier on in the conversation right um it's about building that Community that helps them as well with like you said their agency which. Sometimes, the more Important element than maybe the technical skills that's taught in the class right um yeah so, which is why then again such a space where where these women can fit in the community is important.

Interviewer: And so it's it kind of becomes like a vicious cycle, where you need the numbers, but then the true impact of those trainings or or the program is also dependent on what people do after it.

Interviewer: And then that's also. dependent on how they come out feeling about themselves after the Program.

Participant: yeah I would say for some very vulnerable people sometimes just being in that space is an achievement, you know, we see that in with migrant programs that you know this is someone who.

Participant: Maybe it's been a massive achievement for her because she's experienced trauma just to leave the House on her own and to put herself into

a space with new people.

Participant: That is a massive achievement like without doing that that is the building block from her to be able to do anything in the future, whether it's getting a new job, whether it's.

Participant: talking to her children's teacher whether it's learning something else, and the fact that she has come, you know, once a week or however often and put herself into that space, even if she doesn't get a certificate at the end was already a massive achievement and.

Participant: And I think you know, in the West we've become really conversant in in mental health, you know we talked about it all the time and we're so like you know worried about our own mental health and anxiety and fear this that and other.

Participant: and actually the burden of mental health amongst you know poor women in poor countries, I mean it's barely researched

Participant: but in reality is massive and it's just the people, maybe weren't confident about talking about him no one's been researching it and.

Participant: Yet we you know so much programming doesn't take into consideration, you know, the fact that you need to be safe, you need to feel safe, not just to be safe to feel safe to feel welcome to feel valued in order to be able to think actually you know what is worth me sitting in this classroom for the next six weeks.

Participant: I have a reason to get, pull myself out of the whatever circumstances i'm struggling with at home to make time to come and study here, because actually I believe that my future could improve.

Participant: You know if you don't believe your future can improve you're not going to bother to get into that classroom.

Participant: So yeah.

Participant: yeah.

Interviewer: Okay i'm perfect I think i'm done with all of my questions and.

Participant: I hope its usable material

Interviewer: your answers actually answered quite a few of my questions within your other answers.

# TRANSFORMATIVE ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEMS IN POST-CONFLICT COUNTRIES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

FATEN ANAN KANAAN

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## Abstract

Novel forms of social, sustainable, and environmental entrepreneurship are being identified as engines of reforms able to solve the diverse challenges that our world and communities are faced with, but can they help unconventional contexts like those of post-conflict? The ability of entrepreneurship to alleviate economies and livelihoods while driving sustainable practices has gained traction from researchers, academics, and professionals in recent years. Evidently, the characteristics and dynamics of entrepreneurship depend on contextual elements, including political, legal, and economic factors, making the study of entrepreneurship in post-conflict contexts a necessary endeavour to enhance our understanding of its peculiarities. This will help develop policies and future reforms which facilitate the production of desirable entrepreneurship that supports constructive outcomes and sustainable development rather than destructive entrepreneurship. The little research that exists on the potential of 'transformative entrepreneurship' and 'transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems' as nascent concepts to help countries rebuild their economies, social capital, physical infrastructure, and prosperity post-war has prompted this study's main research question: How can transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems contribute to the prosperity of post-conflict countries? A systematic literature review of 17 articles produced a conceptual framework that defines the potential of transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems in post-conflict countries. The results characterised transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems, identified pillars needed to establish them, and recognized their positive contributions to prosperity. Beyond the outcomes, the findings propose recommendations for further research based on identified gaps and limitations of this study.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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While social, sustainable, and environmental enterprises have gained global traction to solve the diverse challenges that our world and communities are faced with, little attention has been given to their potential power to uplift the states of fragile and conflict-hit countries. As the world stands today, it faces complex challenges that span from violent conflict and environmental degradation to poverty and social injustice. In response, the United Nations has developed the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to mobilize nations, companies, and individuals alike to make responsible development decisions that help tackle, solve, and mitigate the risks of these challenges (Gölgeci et al., 2021). Among the agenda's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of achieving global prosperity and strengthening universal peace, a particular emphasis holds on supporting skills formation, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship (Gölgeci et al., 2021). While the agenda provides this as a general framework, context-specific considerations on the heterogeneity of our societies are needed to ensure constructive implementation (Candiya Bongomin et al., 2018; Efendic et al., 2015; Naudé, 2009).

The characteristics and dynamics of entrepreneurship as a phenomenon differ across countries depending on contextual elements, such as political & legal, economic, technological, environmental, social, and cultural factors, and the level of economic development (Acs et al., 2008). According to Autio (2007), these differences play a role in the orientation of entrepreneurial activities, highlighting that the nature and structure of these activities varies as reflected by, for instance, the relative volume of necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship across countries. Acs and Varga (2005) conducted research in 11 countries and found that opportunity entrepreneurship (taking initiative to exploit a perceived opportunity) has a significant impact on economic development contrary to necessity entrepreneurship (taking initiative due to necessity) which was found to have no effect. Similarly, Rosinaite (2013) defines 'ambitious entrepreneurs' as catalysts for economic growth, job creation, and competitiveness on national and

international levels. While behaviour of less aspiring entrepreneurs exhibits creation of new ventures with the objective being to take care of themselves and their families than the overall economy. Although justified in contexts of conflict, an inquiry into how to stimulate sustainable opportunity entrepreneurship among members of conflict-hit communities is necessary to present practical findings that ensure entrepreneurial activity contributes towards constructive and sustainable development.

Most existing research on entrepreneurship is fragmented and looks narrowly at aspects of entrepreneurship due to the richness and the complexity of ways of being entrepreneurial (Anderson & Starnawska, 2008). Entrepreneurship has long been seen as an important 'mechanism for economic development' due to its employment, innovation, and welfare effects (Acs et al., 2008, p. 219). Recent research based on new forms of purpose-led entrepreneurial ventures, such as socially-driven enterprises, shows that entrepreneurship can also be harnessed to help achieve local and global prosperity, reinforcing its perception as a driver for sustainable development (Dees, 2008; Khavul & Bruton, 2013). However, such studies on ventures that consider social, sustainable, and/or environmental impact as part of their purpose are limited. Many researchers have highlighted that entrepreneurship is a broad concept encompassing a number of disciplines, leaving entrepreneurship with a variety of definitions and ways individuals understand and use the notion of entrepreneurship (Anderson & Starnawska, 2008; McElwee, 2006) (Anderson & Starnawska, 2008; McElwee, 2006). The latter has left the boundaries of social, sustainable, and environmental entrepreneurship blurred and often contested, forging the space for researchers to go beyond the narrow confines of definition by tapping into how people interpret entrepreneurship. This brings forth the aggregate progressive concept of 'transformative entrepreneurship', which in this dissertation circumscribes purpose-led social, sustainable, and/or environmental initiatives and enterprises created with the intent of generating a positive impact on prosperity (Kanaan, 2022).

Understanding how transformative entrepreneurship could play a role in the sustainable development of different contexts is pivotal to ensuring such sought-after normative mechanisms for change result in the positive outcomes desired (Naudé, 2009). While entrepreneurship can be channelled into productive activities that contribute to positive economic and social impact, it can also result in unproductive and destructive activities when a certain structure of incentives, such as lack of security and trust in institutions, exists (Naudé, 2009). Such structures are often found in conflict-hit and post-conflict or post-war contexts, which makes the implementation of mechanisms like entrepreneurship an important point for research. To the best of my knowledge, the number of studies focusing on the potential impact of transformative entrepreneurship in general contexts is limited and correspondingly so for post-conflict contexts (Efendic et al., 2015; Kolk & Lenfant, 2015). Thus, it is critical to consider how fragile countries could utilise the concept of transformative entrepreneurship to create ecosystems that guide them towards productive activities contributing to the development and prosperity of their economies, societies, and general environment.

The peculiarity of each post-conflict context and the various ways that transformative entrepreneurship could impact development and prosperity, prompted this study's main research question: How can transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems contribute to the prosperity of post-conflict countries? The central question is answered through a systematic literature review (SLR) that assesses existing literature on the influence of transformative entrepreneurship and its ecosystem on the development and prosperity of post-war countries. The result will be a conceptual framework that defines transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems in post-war contexts with the elements that nurture them.

In the following sub-sections, the research will set the scene by defining key terms relating to transformative entrepreneurship (TE) and transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems (TEEs). I begin by looking at entrepreneurship research and what constitutes this phenomenon to then

introduce the more recent forms of entrepreneurial ventures that combine social and environmental purposes with their economic objectives. This section will then look at what constitutes a transformative entrepreneurial ecosystem based on our understanding from empirical research.

From thereon, the structure of this dissertation is as follows. We first explain the research design (section 2) used to explore TEEs in post-war contexts. Our choice of literature systematic review (SR) will be rationalized in this section along with the research ethics. In section 3, the systematic review (SR) will be carried out to investigate transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems', variables needed to nurture them, and how their impact connects to prosperity of post-conflict countries. Final remarks and conclusions are presented in section 4.

## 1.1 SETTING THE SCENE

### 1.1.1 Transformative entrepreneurship (TE)

Entrepreneurship is seen as a multifaceted phenomenon with varying definitions across different contexts but in almost all entrepreneurship literature, it is described as a phenomenon exhibiting: (1) initiative taking, (2) organizing and reorganizing of social and economic mechanisms to turn resources and situations to practical interpretations, and (3) undertaking of risk or acceptance of failure (Rosinaite, 2013; Sarasvathy, 2009). The rise of new forms of entrepreneurship that focus on initiative-taking to address social or environmental challenges without prioritizing profit generation has captured the attention of policymakers, academics, practitioners, and the public alike. The purposes of such enterprises differ; some place importance on solving social inequalities, which scholars refer to as social entrepreneurship (Dacin et al., 2011). Whereas environmental or sustainable entrepreneurs concentrate on setting up ventures to reverse the negative externalities affecting our environment, which result from our current consumption-based economy (Dean & McMullen, 2007; Thompson et al., 2011). Research on this new field of entrepreneurship that places equal importance on social and/or environmental impact as it does on



economic growth remains limited. With attempts to define each uniquely based on empirical examples, scholars and researchers have struggled to draw the lines between definitions due to the overlapping missions of these enterprises (i.e. enterprises with both social and environmental purposes versus others with environmental purposes only). The importance of defining these different forms lies in their emergent catalysts, which remain insufficiently understood and resulted in the concept being contested altogether (Toivonen, 2016). With that, this dissertation discusses these new forms of purpose-led ventures under one concept referred to as 'transformative entrepreneurship'.

There are three main critical dimensions that outline transformative entrepreneurship in this paper. The first is the ability to drive innovative change (Mahfuz Ashraf et al., 2019), one that moves away from conventional short-term solutions towards lasting transformational impact (Boyce, 2002; Shevtsova et al., 2020). The perception of innovation, or innovative solutions, differ based on context, which is exemplified in the way 'underlying ideologies of growth-oriented neo-liberal development applied in the global south can be viewed as neo-colonial and environmentally unsustainable' (Jimenez & Roberts, 2019, p. 3). Nevertheless, innovation shares one common element across disciplines and that is the introduction of 'newness' or 'improved ways of doing things' (Anderson et al., 2014; Shevtsova et al., 2020). Particularly in international development studies, innovation is defined as 'applying new tools or processes to address development challenges and unmet needs' (World Bank, 2015, as cited in, Jimenez & Roberts, 2019, p. 2). Taking the post-war context being considered in this study, it is important to be wary of the neo-liberal interpretation of innovation to avoid committing 'epistemic violence' by being insufficiently mindful of the epistemologies of the global south as global north actors. Rather, transformative entrepreneurship's focus is on strengthening local actors to innovate in ways that would benefit the prosperity of local communities initially and the world consequently (Jimenez & Roberts, 2019).

The second distinct dimension of transformative

enterprises is their purpose. In traditional entrepreneurship, there is the implicit assumption that opportunities are exploited for economic gain, with little consideration for social or environmental influence (Pacheco et al., 2010; Thompson et al., 2011). However, in transformative entrepreneurship, the catalysts for opportunity exploitation are driven by challenges for sustainable social and/or environmental development (Thompson et al., 2011). Nonetheless, many existing enterprises nowadays are shifting from their economic focus to achieve sustainable grounds (Kolk & Lenfant, 2016). Such attempts, when met with the other dimensions, entice transformative change. More specifically, this dissertation focuses on opportunity entrepreneurship (Acs, 2006), where the underexploited opportunity being explored has a positive and significant impact on development.

The third dimension focuses on transformative entrepreneurship's ripple effect – intended or unintended – contribution to prosperity. Various theories explore the concept of prosperity and what it entails. The broad definition is concerned with the relationship between individual lives and the larger systems and constraints within which they are embedded. Influenced by capitalist thinking, prosperity seems to have lost its meaning because of the widening gaps in the quality of life between those who benefit from the value created and extracted in our economies and societies and those who do not (Mintchev & Moore, 2021; Moore, 2015). Driven by theories of well-being that critique the 'economics-first' approach to progress, scholars have pushed for the redefinition of prosperity in measures less concerned with aggregate economic growth and GDP and more concentrated on the things that people care about and need as illustrated in the Institute for Global Prosperity (IGP)'s index of prosperity in Figure 1 (Mintchev & Moore, 2021). It is worth noticing that similarly to entrepreneurship, the definition of prosperity beyond economic growth is embedded in context-specific narratives of a prosperous life (Moore, 2015). Therefore, a context-specific exercise is relevant to determine the definition of prosperity for post-war communities and yield an accurate representation of reality. However, due to time and resource limitations,

this study will consider the IGP prosperity index a general measure of prosperity even for communities of post-war countries.



**Figure 1. IGP Prosperity Index (Mintchev & Moore, 2021, p. 9)**

### 1.1.2 Transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems (TEEs)

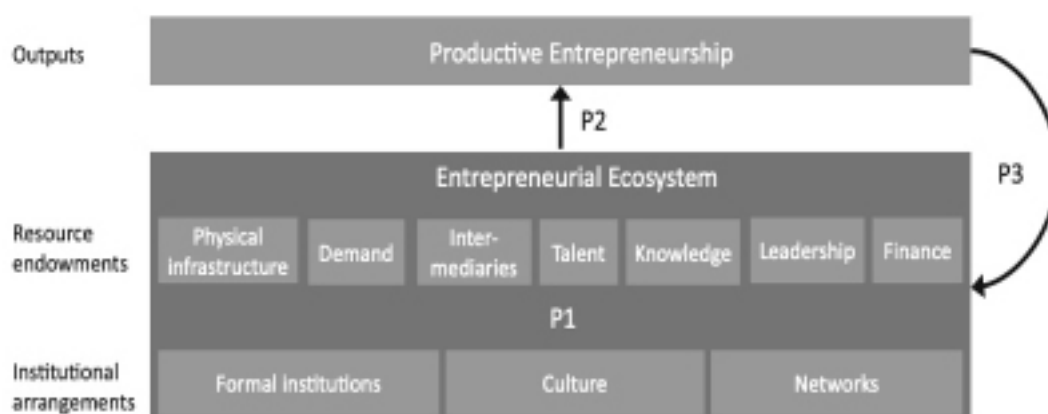
The notion of ‘ecosystems’ has been applied across a wide variety of contexts outside its original application in biological systems. The term is often used as a metaphor for describing a range of value-creating interactions and relationships within a connected set of organisations (Autio & Thomas, 2014). In management research, ecosystems are also used metaphorically to describe the macro environment within which an interconnected network of industries, firms, and entities exist around a focal firm or platform (Autio & Thomas, 2014). However, this metaphor’s definition remains versatile, making it particularly attractive because of its ability to highlight the interdependencies between organisations while also providing a fresh way to think about specialisation, co-evolution, and co-creation of value (Autio & Thomas, 2014; Stam & Van De Ven, 2021). Ecosystems have gained vast popularity, making the adoption and implementation

of ecosystem policies by governments and non-governmental organisations surpass its research foundation, leaving policy to lead research rather than the other way around (Wurth et al., 2022). Nonetheless, the basic ideas underlying the entrepreneurial ecosystem as a concept are based on solid research traditions covering several related literature including entrepreneurship context (Autio et al., 2014; Welter, 2011, as cited in Wurth et al., 2022), high-growth entrepreneurship (Autio & Rannikko, 2016, as cited in Wurth et al., 2022), clusters (Delgado et al., 2010, as cited in Wurth et al., 2022), regional innovation systems (Cooke, 2007, as cited in Wurth et al., 2022), entrepreneurial environments (Gnyawali & Fogel, 1994, as cited in Wurth et al., 2022), and business ecosystems (Moore, 1993, as cited in Wurth et al., 2022). The concept of an entrepreneurial ecosystem provides the space to synthesise the interdependencies between the literature to explore new avenues of inquiry regarding issues related to supporting economic growth and prosperity (Wurth et al., 2022).

Scholars (Acs et al., 2017; Spigel, 2017; Stam, 2015, as cited in Wurth et al., 2022) and practitioners (Feld 2012; Isenberg 2010, as cited in Wurth et al., 2022) have increasingly been using the metaphor ‘entrepreneurial ecosystem’ as a comprehensive concept to understand the macro context of entrepreneurship in particular territories (countries, regions, cities). Stam (2015, as cited in Stam & Van De Ven, 2021) highlights that the entrepreneurial ecosystem ‘comprises a set of interdependent actors and factors that are governed in such a way that they enable productive entrepreneurship’ (Stam & Van de Ven, 2021, p. 809). Drawing on the concept of ‘transformative entrepreneurial ecosystem’, we formally use it to describe entrepreneurial ecosystems that consist of interdependent actors (government, corporations, small and medium enterprises, entrepreneurs) and factors (policy, networks) that produce innovative solutions with positive ripple effects on prosperity.

Research proposes four broad components of an ecosystem (termed ‘infrastructure’) for entrepreneurship, including (1) institutional arrangements that legitimate, regulate and incentivize entrepreneurship; (2) public resource capacities of basic scientific knowledge, financing mechanisms and pools of competent labour; (3) market demand of informed consumers for the

products and services offered by entrepreneurs; and (4) proprietary business activities that private entrepreneurs provide through R&D, manufacturing, marketing and distribution functions (Van de Ven, 1993, as cited in Stam & Van de Ven, 2021). Additionally, Isenberg (2010) articulated six distinct sectors of an ecosystem: policy, finance, culture, support, human capital and markets. Inspired by these studies and prior academic explorations, Stam and Van De Ven (2021) propose an aggregate model of entrepreneurial ecosystems comprising ten elements along with entrepreneurial outputs (Figure 2). Based on Van de Ven (1993)’s infrastructure for ecosystems that stems from a social system framework, the model is conceptualized to include the institutional arrangements and resource endowments components. The institutional arrangement is represented through formal institutions, culture, and network elements. Resource endowment is represented through physical infrastructure, finance, leadership, talent, knowledge, intermediate services, and demand elements. The third component, proprietary functions, comprises the entrepreneurial firms commercialising innovations; regarded as the output of the entrepreneurial ecosystem is new value creation, represented in productive entrepreneurship (Stam & Van De Ven, 2021).



**Figure 2. Elements and outputs of entrepreneurial ecosystem (Stam and Ven, 2021, p. 813)**

Wurth et al. (2022) note a major shift in research from productive entrepreneurship to social entrepreneurship in efforts to recognise the wider effects beyond economic terms; calling to open research on productive entrepreneurship to incorporate social and ecological value creation. Although the latter cannot be measured in monetary terms, they are of value to society at large, making them a critical concept for exploration through an ecosystem lens. This paper aims to contribute to research of ecosystems that support economic, social, and ecological value creation through the concept of 'transformative entrepreneurship'.

While 'transformative entrepreneurship' is all-encompassing of social, environmental, and sustainable entrepreneurship, it demonstrates the power of entrepreneurship to entice positive change. Transformative entrepreneurs place impactful (social/environmental and economic) value-creation at the heart of their mission to benefit individuals, communities, and others (Sekliuckiene & Kisielius, 2015). Seen as new engines for reform (Dees, 2008), a transformative entrepreneurial ecosystem is needed to cultivate and sustain such agents of change who can aid the public sector in its efforts for economic growth and achieving local and global prosperity (Isenberg, 2010). Therefore, an ecosystem that fosters transformative entrepreneurs and enterprises is key to creating a movement of positive change while ensuring its sustainability and development over time. Drawing on learnings from the systematic review on transformative entrepreneurship in post-conflict contexts worldwide, I will demonstrate transformative entrepreneurship's potential as a tool to generate responsible socio-economic and prosperity-contributing growth. Looking at the potential impact of transformative entrepreneurship on post-war countries from the lens of an ecosystem, such as that shown in Figure 2, will provide us with a macro view of the different factors influencing the prosperity of post-war contexts.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 DECIDING METHODS

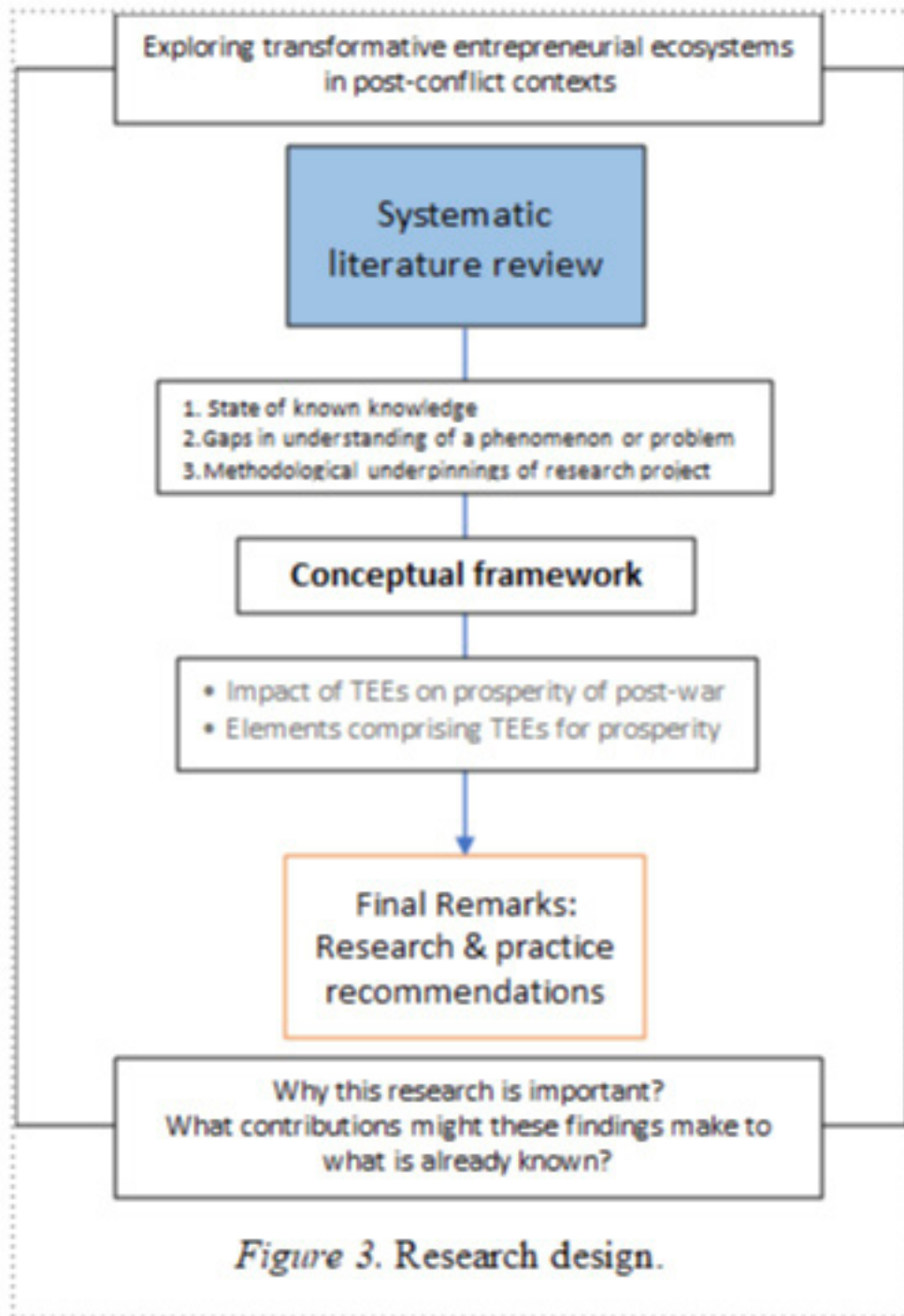
While social, sustainable, and environmental entrepreneurship have lately been the focal interest of entrepreneurship research, little attempt has been made to comprehensively review what transformative entrepreneurial impact entails in general and for post-conflict countries, in particular. Qualitative research is particularly important in advancing our understanding of entrepreneurship due to its ability to study phenomena in-depth while deploying creative methods for the production and analysis of empirical data (Hlady-Rispal & Jouison-Laffitte, 2014). While entrepreneurship remains a young field of research, with varying definitions crossing many concepts from diverse disciplines, it continues to be mostly based on deductive and quantitative research that looks into very particular, often global north, contexts (Hlady-Rispal & Jouison-Laffitte, 2014). To motivate a shift, scholars have been advocating to consider diversity in methods when exploring entrepreneurship and to drive research on varied phenomena to obtain practical results for policymakers, educators, and practitioners.

Based on the paper's aim of exploring transformative entrepreneurship in the specific context of post-conflict, this dissertation will follow an inductive qualitative research approach (Xiao & Watson, 2019). The systematic literature review (SLR) adopts the descriptive scoping method (Xiao & Watson, 2019) to identify detailed aspects of the topic from existing literature. The published literature focuses on empirical and theoretical research and cases from post-conflict contexts across the world, which will require inductive reasoning to extract conclusions (Hlady-Rispal & Jouison-Laffitte, 2014). The review will identify key elements that are needed to nurture transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems in post-war contexts. The resulting conclusions will summarize the concepts currently known in research and help set a conceptual framework that underscores why this research is important and how our findings make contributions to what is already known (Varpio et al., 2020).

A systematic literature review was adopted as an approach to eliminate researcher bias (Phillips et al., 2015; Tranfield et al., 2003) because of its systematic methodology that involves a rigorous and comprehensive plan to search, identify, review, and evaluate studies (Mahfuz Ashraf et al., 2019). Through a descriptive scoping approach and cross-referencing between researchers to interpret all available studies in relation to the specific research questions (Mahfuz Ashraf et al., 2019), I am able to set robust findings and concrete inferences (Phillips et al., 2015). The research design revolves around synthesizing secondary data to explore the recently developed concepts of transformative entrepreneurship in the under-researched contexts of post-war and post-conflict (refer to Figure 3). Although every post-conflict context has its unique attributes (Naudé, 2009), this review approach aims to summarize conducted research into conclusions that provide recommendations to such contexts as well as recommendations for future research.

### 2.2 ETHICS OF CONDUCTING RESEARCH

A 'Research Ethics Application Form for IGP Student Dissertations' was completed and discussed with the primary supervisor for this study. After which it was approved by the IGP at UCL ensuring that the research abides by IGP's ethics for conducting research.



# 3. SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF TRANSFORMATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Through this systematic review of published evidence, the below section will explore the potential of TEEs in post-war contexts. The aim of this review is to set a conceptual framework that describes how TEEs can help contribute to the rebuilding of a country's post-war economy and prosperity. Beyond looking for outcomes, it will put forth the variables needed for the development of transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems to propose recommendations and draw on possibilities and challenges for conflict-hit countries.

## 3.1 METHODOLOGY

### Review Research Questions

The systematic review will identify key elements and examples illustrating the impact of transformative entrepreneurship on the prosperity of post-war contexts by gauging three research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems in post-conflict countries?
2. What are the elements needed to nurture transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems to drive prosperity in post-conflict countries?
3. How do transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems in post-war countries connect to prosperity?

### Study selection criteria

The inclusion criteria considered theoretical and empirical research on qualitative and quantitative evidence of transformative entrepreneurship and its corresponding ecosystem as concepts and their practical interpretations in post-war contexts. This included notions such as small-and-medium enterprises, social bricolage, hybrid organisations, sustainable entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial behaviours, entrepreneurial environments, and entrepreneurial skills. Alternatively to the PICO

tool (Population, Intervention, Comparison and Outcomes) often used to identify components of quantitative evidence, the SPIDER (Sample, Phenomena of Interest, Design, Evaluation, and Research Type) was adopted as a suitable tool for this qualitative study. The SPIDER tool was specifically designed to identify qualitative and mixed-method studies while excluding irrelevant PICO categories that are specific to quantitative research such as the 'comparison' criteria (Methley et al., 2014). Figure 4 shows the inclusion criteria illustrated through SPIDER: the sample of studies to be considered, phenomena of interest being explored, design, evaluation, and research type of the review/exploration.

### Searching and screening

The search strategy followed a top-down approach. Beginning with devising keywords and terms from the research questions, the following were identified: entrepreneurship, transformative, entrepreneurial ecosystems, sustainable entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, environmental entrepreneurship, post-war entrepreneurship, post-conflict entrepreneurship, redevelopment, development, prosperity. By combining different terms using Boolean operators, a general search was carried out on two of the most comprehensive online journal databases: SCOPUS and Web of Science. Initial results showed that Web of Science gathered a larger number of articles for similar Boolean combinations. Therefore, Web of Science was established as the preferred database for this review. Different search queries using Boolean operators were attempted before the final thorough query was determined as shown: (Entrepreneurship OR "entrepreneurial ecosystem" OR entrepreneurial) AND (transformative OR social OR sustainable OR environmental) AND (post-war OR post-conflict) AND (redevelopment OR development OR prosperity). This query yielded a total of 42 records.

The exclusion criteria, according to the title, abstract, and full report considered:



<b>S</b>	<b>Sample</b> Studies exploring countries, governments, individuals, enterprises, and activities deploying transformative (social, environmental, sustainable) entrepreneurship in post-conflict contexts to achieve development/prosperity.
<b>P I</b>	<b>Phenomena of Interest</b> Transformative (social, environmental, sustainable) entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial ecosystems in post-conflict countries.
<b>D</b>	<b>Design of study</b> Qualitative analysis of qualitative and quantitative empirical evidence including surveys, focus groups, and interviews. Qualitative research on past literature.
<b>E</b>	<b>Evaluation</b> Outcome measures: defining TE in post-conflict contexts, its importance and effects on prosperity, and elements needed to nurture TEEs to ensure rebuilding with prosperous lens.
<b>R</b>	<b>Research type</b> Research analysing TE potential through impact evaluations, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods.

*Figure 4. SPIDER criteria.*

- Studies not related to transformative, social, sustainable, or environmental entrepreneurship or transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems in post-war or post-conflict contexts
- Studies published before 2000
- Studies not based on quantitative and/or qualitative data
- Studies with spelling/grammatical mistakes
- Studies that needed translation to English
- Studies that were not accessible

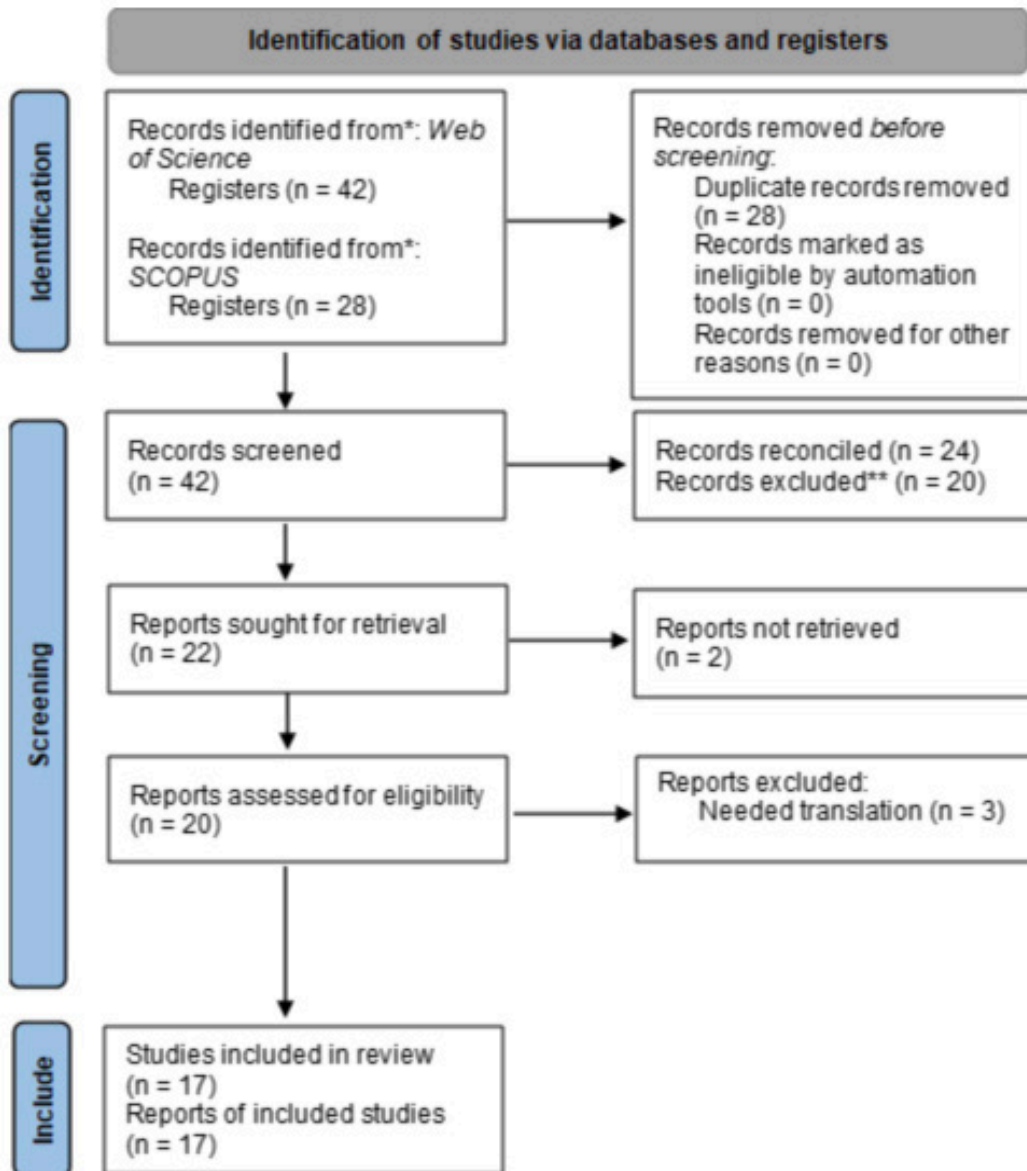
### **Synthesis**

The initial electronic search, based on the mentioned Boolean combination, yielded 42 results. For ensuring rigor and accuracy in the literature selection process, the help of a second independent reviewer (“Reviewer 2”) was requested to provide their own results based on the shared inclusion and exclusion criteria. After filtering through the title and abstract, I (“Reviewer 1”) found 17 articles

that matched the inclusion criteria. The selection of the second reviewer provided 21 articles. After discussion and reconciliation between reviewers, a final selection list of 22 articles was determined for review.

In trying to procure the articles, three needed translation and two could not be accessed through any of the available resources. After applying the final exclusion criteria, the sample was reduced to 17 articles (40.5%). A full list of the reviewed articles can be found in the appendix; with a simplified illustration of the selection process shown in Figure 5.

The articles based on qualitative methods focused mostly on Africa, with 8 on various African countries, 4 on Europe, one on South America (Colombia) and one partly on the Middle East. The qualitative papers spanned various disciplines with the main being policy, followed by management and development, respectively. The overarching theme among these studies lies in their exploration of specific phenomena in post-conflict entrepreneurship ecosystems, such as the role of partnerships, foreign firms, hybrid



*Figure 5. Selection process of articles for review.*

organisations, small-and-medium enterprises, diaspora and transnational entrepreneurs as well as other underrepresented and industry-specific (potential) entrepreneurs. These phenomena are observed among macroenvironment-related elements and factors influencing ecosystems such as policy and institutions (particularly lack thereof), networks, innovation, risk, migration, political setting, and violence.

The quantitative research paper, conducted in a

region in Northern Uganda, revolves around studying the interaction effect of government support on key elements that support the growth and survival of small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs). The mixed-methods papers all studied post-conflict contexts in Europe, which could justify the choice of the research approach seeing that data is more easily accessible there than in Africa, for instance (Candiya Bongomin et al., 2018). An overview of the articles' characteristics is available in Table 1, with a detailed analysis in the appendix (A2).

**Table 1. Characteristics of articles for review**

<b>Article Type</b>	<b>Count</b>
Empirical	13
Theoretical	4
<b>Method</b>	
Qualitative	13
Quantitative	1
Mixed-method	3
<b>Region</b>	
Africa	8
Europe	7
Middle East	1
South America	1
<b>Discipline</b>	
Development	2
Management	5
Policy	9
Urban Studies	2

Many of the themes covered in these pieces overlap, such as the importance of policy, institutional support, and skills development for improved entrepreneurial activity – with the main common thread being the post-war context. None of the articles explore ‘transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems’ in that specific terminology but rather touch on interpretations of it and aspects related to the specificities that comprise it like the entrepreneurs and social factors, ventures, and physical environment. The results clearly show that the concept remains nascent, leaving the space for researchers to categorize, describe, and map relevant concepts and evidence to create a conceptual framework as is the aim of this systematic review.

## **3.2 RESULTS**

### **3.2.1 Characteristics of transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems in post-war contexts**

*From productive, unproductive, destructive to constructive entrepreneurship*

The review establishes that post-war contexts have peculiarities that distinguish them from stable contexts or even from their own pre-war landscape. Conflict and war carry with them new actors that create strenuous living conditions for communities, often shaped by violence, uncertainty, institutional voids and changed social fabric (Gölgeci et al., 2021; Kolk & Lenfant, 2015, 2016; Langevang & Namatovu, 2019; Naudé, 2009). A commonly mentioned characteristic is the notion of ‘productive’ entrepreneurship versus the potential of ‘unproductive’ or at times ‘destructive’ entrepreneurship. Naudé (2009) introduces the idea that entrepreneurship is not intrinsically good or bad and specifically in post-war contexts, peace-disrupting entrepreneurship can exist and is referred to as unproductive or destructive. He argues that entrepreneurship in contexts of conflict fulfil three roles: 1) source funds to sustain conflicts, 2) overcome the adverse impacts of conflict, and 3) exploit profitable opportunities arising from conflict. Many war members identify opportunities in such times and take part in entrepreneurial activity, including rulers, warlords, and smugglers who rise

as 'conflict entrepreneurs' (Cooper, 2006, as cited in Naudé, 2009). Their activity has the capacity to provide capital for post-war investment as well as provide means for them to possess political power through the post-conflict period (Naudé, 2009). The appearance of institutional voids further incentivizes entrepreneurs, including 'conflict entrepreneurs', to undermine the legitimacy of government and in turn obstruct attempts at establishing peace and impacting post-conflict economic success (Naudé, 2009). This promotes the appearance of 'unproductive' or 'destructive' forms of entrepreneurship, that do not contribute to stabilizing the context socially or economically but rather perpetuate violence and power disequilibrium.

Another example of unproductive or destructive entrepreneurship is described by De Waal (2020) in contemporary Somalia and how its armed conflict and post-conflict disorder led to the rise and consolidation of 'clan units' and putative ethno-subnationalism. These clan units led to failed wars and elite security politics that created a parallel market accommodating monetisation of patronage and political-military entrepreneurship. Peace processes and efforts initiated by people on the ground to end the political marketplace and establish social order were disrupted by the prioritisation of building conventional state apparatus and initiating war on terror driven by the West's understanding of development. This accentuates how conflict and imported conceptions of development can affect entrepreneurship during and post-conflict, resulting in the conception of entrepreneurial activity that could affect contexts negatively to a destructive extent.

In that respect, Naudé (2009) promotes the idea that entrepreneurship is not a lacking quality in post-conflict countries but rather ubiquitous. A study further explained 'while diverse, entrepreneurship in conflict and post-conflict is usually "simple, local and informal" and spans "productive", "unproductive" and "destructive forms"' (Langevang and Namatovu, 2019, p. 788). The latter points that policies and endeavours advocating for entrepreneurship need to consider that development might not be the direct impact of entrepreneurship. Rather, it

is important to realise the different forms in which entrepreneurship could exist. From there, the right conditions need to exist to nurture entrepreneurial ecosystems that reallocate existing and potential entrepreneurial efforts from unproductive and destructive activities towards constructive activities that contribute to peace and prosperity (Gölgeci et al., 2021; Langevang & Namatovu, 2019; Naudé, 2009).

Limited research has been done to explore entrepreneurship in fragile and post-conflict contexts (Gölgeci et al., 2021; Kolk & Lenfant, 2015), posing a need to explore entrepreneurship and its different forms in these contexts; not only to draw on what forms of (if any) entrepreneurship exist but to investigate entrepreneurship's potential in helping these regions prosper (Dileni Gunewardena, 2020; Naudé, 2009). Transformative entrepreneurship is not a term that is employed by this sample of articles. However, based on the previous definitions set for transformative entrepreneurship (Section 1.1.1), each study focuses on some aspect of entrepreneurial activity or the actors that create transformative change and contribute to peace through constructive entrepreneurial activities. This includes initiatives with a social purpose, like hybrid organisations, or individuals with the potential to unlock transformative change in their communities like youth and women.

### *Purpose to 'Make peace work'*

The sample of articles indicates that for post-conflict countries, establishing peace is one milestone but sustaining it is another. A post-conflict context is perceived to be one where initial steps towards peace have been established with the aim of curating efforts concentrated on reconciliation and reconstruction (Kolk & Lenfant, 2016). In such contexts, there are 'high expectations for development, improving material conditions and consolidating peace' (Naudé, 2009, p. 251). (Kolk & Lenfant, 2015, 2016; Langevang & Namatovu, 2019; Naudé, 2009). The sample discusses the various ways in which entrepreneurial efforts and ecosystems are needed, and can help, in peacebuilding and reconciliation by exploring roles

of potential contributors.

Partnerships among multisectoral and multilevel stakeholders in post-conflict settings are observed in developing local communities with the aim of peacebuilding; a practice reconfiguring traditional market priorities of businesses. Gölgeci et al. (2021) focus on how foreign firms contribute to peace in post-war contexts through skills and competency development programs. Skilled employees are believed to elevate their own and their families' socioeconomic status, keeping them away from armed conflict and violence. In that sense, foreign firms believe they are playing a role in peacebuilding efforts when developing the skills of their local employees in post-war countries (Cederman et al., 2013; Naudé, 2007, as cited in Gölgeci et al., 2021). Kolk and Lenfant (2015) study partnerships between local, national, and international actors for peace in fragile post-conflict states. They highlight that because conflicts are often affected by broader national/regional settings with dimensions related to security, justice, governance, and economic development; sustainable peace is only achievable through partnerships that are local in nature but linked to the mentioned higher-level phenomena through national or international actors. Similarly, Kolk and Lenfant (2016) explore how hybrid businesses (businesses with economic and social purposes) play a part in substantiating peace and other development-related issues in post-war countries while balancing their market-based revenue-generating undertakings and social activities. They suggest that in conflict-hit settings where there is a need to reduce conflict and further peace, the adoption and rise of transformative enterprises (businesses that converge social and commercial sectors) may be faster than other more stable regions (Kolk & Lenfant, 2016).

Entrepreneurship ecosystems can act as mediums for promoting peacebuilding (Daka & Siad, 2022) but insight into how organisations involved in post-conflict contexts integrate societal aims with economic ones in their business models remains limited (Kolk & Lenfant, 2016). The uncertainty of the peace process in post-conflict contexts deters potential entrepreneurs, particularly transnational

entrepreneurs, from taking part in entrepreneurial activity or even recommend so (Santamaria-Alvarez et al., 2018). The sample collectively poses 'peace' as a peculiar quality characterizing TEEs in post-war and post-conflict contexts clearly alluding to peace as one of the effects, if not objectives, of socially-focused enterprises in post-war countries. Seemingly, the right conditions are needed to produce an entrepreneurial ecosystem that will 'make peace work' for post-war contexts, making peacebuilding a purpose for all entrepreneurial ventures in such contexts (Naudé, 2009, 251)

### *Institutional setting*

War impacts the capacity of public and private institutions as it diminishes the power of public institutions in allocating resources and enacting regulations that would improve living standards, provide confidence for investment or engagement of private institutions, and support entrepreneurial efforts toward productive activities and peacebuilding (Catic-Kajtazovic, 2013; Daka & Siad, 2022; Dileni Gunewardena, 2020; Naudé, 2009). Public institutions face the challenge of re-establishing legitimacy as they are required to address pressing social, economic, and political obstacles post-conflict. Destruction of infrastructure, internal and cross-border refugees, unemployment, sheltering displaced people, rehabilitation and reintegration of affected communities, and economic recovery are among the adversities that require their intervention (Ogbaharya, 2008, as cited in Langevang and Namatovu, 2019). This situation magnifies the incapacities of the institutions in responding to the challenges, leading to a dominant view of public institutions in post-conflict countries as inadequate and lacking understanding of local needs. The authors are prompted to study the deficiencies of government and policymakers to recommend the reforms needed to build entrepreneurial ecosystems that utilize efforts towards peacebuilding and prosperity.

Settings of weak formal institutions and poor enforcement of laws lead to failure at availing development-contributing opportunities and the potential rise of destructive entrepreneurship.

Williams (2020) and Santamaria-Alvarez et al. (2018) underscore weak formal institutions and poor enforcement of laws, regulations and property rights, and informal institutions that fail at capturing the interest of diaspora and transnational entrepreneurs who carry valuable skills that benefit their home country. Establishing robust policies and institutions would instil trust in the ecosystem and encourage the involvement of diaspora and transnational entrepreneurs, as well as foreign direct investment. Additionally, Dileni Gunewardena (2020) found that financial institutions have the potential to discriminate when approving credit loans for women and young entrepreneurs in post-conflict contexts, leading to their marginalisation. Government institutions hold the role of ensuring the regulation of such practices to increase the propensity of entrepreneurship by encouraging credit uptake while minimizing the risk of default. Efendic et al. (2015) explore the effect of social dimensions shaping trust in institutions on managerial growth aspirations of young firms in the specific context of Bosnia & Herzegovina; an analysis that they claim can offer lessons potentially applicable to other post-conflict environments. Their study shows that countries with 'high-quality institutions, create homogenous expectations based on formal rules that generate shared understanding and are applied consistently' (Efendic et. al, 2015, p. 541). Internal conflict results in weaker institutions that undermine the rule of law and formal authority, replacing it with local informal structures of power such as paramilitary or criminal groups that distort any notions of security or trust in formal institutions (Armakolas, 2011, as cited in Efendic et al., 2015). Such settings of weak institutions creates the space for destructive entrepreneurship (Efendic et al., 2015; Naudé, 2009).

Educational institutions influence the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems that yield transformative change. According to Daka and Siad (2022) knowledge-generating institutions, such as universities, are essential in the creation of entrepreneurial ecosystems, particularly in the needed science, technology, and innovation (STI) ecosystem that drives resilience in post-conflict countries. In their institutional analysis, they consider the triple helix of institution-industry-government

interactions as an important factor alongside policy and societal challenges in planning an entrepreneurial ecosystem for peacebuilding. The latter institutions work better when understanding local needs through communications and networks that foster dialogue and stability among institution leaders and civil leaders (Lundvall, Joseph, Chaminade, and Vang 2009, as cited in Daka and Siad, 2022). Surveying entrepreneurs on the absence or lack of a proper STI framework in the national development agenda showed a lack of policy framework for entrepreneurship, innovation, and small-scale businesses in Somalia, which made doing business difficult. Interviews conducted with leaders and practitioners from government institutions, the private sector, and academia in Somalia illustrated that there is concern about the lack of government strategies that help develop science, technology, and innovation. Although there is a large and growing number of entrepreneurs in Somalia because its income-generating aspect, government policies to organize these entrepreneurial efforts by nurturing the STI ecosystem through policy and supporting academic institutions remain minimal, leaving the ecosystem one of highly untapped potential. Similarly, Shevtsova et al. (2020) also discuss the importance of higher education institutions in creating and developing industry-specific expertise. Focusing on the Smart Specialization approach (combining industrial, education, and innovation policies to identify priority areas for knowledge-based investments, based on strengths and comparative advantage), they identify an opportunity in Ukraine's ability, as a post-conflict country, to recreate appropriate institutional conditions that give rise to innovative and investment activities.

Literature about how the post-conflict institutional system collaborates with the private sector and small-to-medium enterprises is lacking (Daka & Siad, 2022) and only approached by policy papers in this sample. According to Candiya Bongomin et al. (2018), small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) face many challenges that obstruct their development, one of which is the unfavourable institutional environment. Lack of support from government in terms of trust, transparency, and



policy and from financial institutions in capital adequacy pose challenges for SMMEs in post-war communities (Candiya Bongomin et al., 2018). In the case of Bosnia & Herzegovina, explain that the systematic and institutional support for the development of SMEs remains inadequate, with the necessary legal and institutional framework for state-level support absent (Catic-Kajtazovic, 2013). SMMEs exist beyond formal institutions, making policy bear the role of nurturing consutrcive entrepreneurship.

Transformative entrepreneurship, like entrepreneurial ecosystems, is only possible with the support of reliable, trusted, and proactive institutions. Public and private sector institutions play an integral part and are essential actors in the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Daka & Siad, 2022). Some argue that only once political and economic situation is stabilized and favourable institutional conditions are set will it be possible for an active innovative entrepreneurial ecosystem to rise (Shevtsova et al., 2020). Recognizing the specificities of post-conflict contexts and understanding the local strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities from thereon can provide institutions with the roadmap to prosperity. Post-conflict countries can approach redevelopment and reconstruction from the bottom-up, posing an opportunity for institutions to consider local meanings of prosperity as foundations for their re-establishment.

### ***Transformative entrepreneurial ventures***

Various studies focus on the entrepreneurial ventures present in post-conflict contexts and how they are affected by or are affecting extenuating conflict and its circumstances. These ventures span phenomena such as social bricolage, purpose-driven organisations, foreign firms, small and medium enterprises, and partnerships. The peculiarities of post-conflict have created or shaped these ventures, making them possess transformative potential and distinct roles from other contexts.

As a 'way of making do' in war-affected contexts 'social bricolage' rises to compensate the amplified presence of institutional voids (Langevang &

Namatovu, 2019). Social bricolage is not particular to conflict-hit contexts but in conditions where institutions are lacking in capacity, like in the case of post-war as described in the previous section, it emerges to fill in the role of institutions in providing goods, services, and support to communities. A study focused on social bricolage as ratified by youth in northern Uganda identified three main practices of social bricolage during post-war: mobilising peers, pluriactivity, and rekindling of culture (Langevang & Namatovu, 2019). Mobilising peers emphasises the way youth operate as a group to make certain projects happen, such as pooling resources to pay off fees (e.g. medical fees) or buying or renting land for agricultural purposes and finding co-producing methods in tilling the land, harvesting, and selling yield for income. All groups engage in several activities, in what the authors refer to as pluriactivity, where they 'and combine market-based revenue-generating undertakings with social activities that do not generate income' (Langevang & Namatovu, 2019, p. 797). This proposes that these groups operate as 'hybrid organisations', (Doherty, Haugh, and Lyon 2014; Fowler 2000 as cited in Langevang & Namatovu, 2019) or in this case, as transformative organisations. In working as groups and supporting peers, social bricolage plays a role in rekindling culture by reuniting communities and instilling a sense of identity through various activities, including teaching children traditional dances. Social bricolage evidently has a positive impact on the communities it exists within, however, the conflict and post-conflict situations from which they arise are settings characterized by extreme levels of resource scarcity and adversity. With that, culture is not a 'contextual factor' shaping entrepreneurial behaviour but is rather a key resource that can be used creatively by entrepreneurs to create value (Langevang & Namatovu, 2019).

Hybrid organisations are found to exist in different degrees in post-conflict contexts, affecting how they address peace and development challenges. Kolk and Lenfant (2016) analyse 53 organisations (35 firms, 14 NGOs, and 4 cooperatives) operating in Rwanda and DRC's coffee industry to introduce the hybrid continuum that spans 6 categories between solely social or solely financial with hybrid forms in



between (Figure 6). The exploration investigates organisation objectives, perspective on mutually beneficial relationships, and interactions with market institutions including engagement with development work and impact on peace and reconciliation. Findings show that hybrid organisations result from an entrepreneurial mindset exhibited in the resilience needed to do business in extreme settings like post-war. Also highlighted, are the ways they operate and the types of relationships they build that create an atmosphere supportive of peace and reconciliation. They work on strengthening ties with the communities with which they work and promote a sense of togetherness. They note that hybridity is often interpreted into a broad set of relationships, with stakeholders internally and externally, and a mission that resonates with social change in a longer-term perspective. The study contributes to the literature by focusing on hybrid organisations beyond the prominent Western setting in which they have already been repeatedly explored and beyond the common cases of new ventures built specifically to combine social and financial objectives. They argue that studies focusing on hybrid organisations in legally-enabled settings provide little insight

into how these organisations work out ‘in a sector/ country context with a weak or largely lacking state, and where boundaries between public and private spheres have become most blurred’ (Kolk and Lenfant, 2016, p. 514).

Another example of ventures operating as transformative entrepreneurial enterprises are foreign firms operating in conflict-hit and post-conflict countries. Findings of a study examining Turkish firms operating in conflict-hit and post-conflict countries (Gölgeci et al., 2021) illustrated their transformative entrepreneurial impact through the skills development programs they deploy to strengthen capabilities of local employees in these challenging settings. Intending to empower them through knowledge and technical skill, the firms perceive this investment as a contribution to peacebuilding in these contexts due to their impact on the lives of their employees and by extension, their families. A lack of investigations exists to determine the extent of impact such foreign firms with set agendas and often some disconnect from local contexts could have in developing the fragile contexts and fulfilling a part in their peacebuilding.

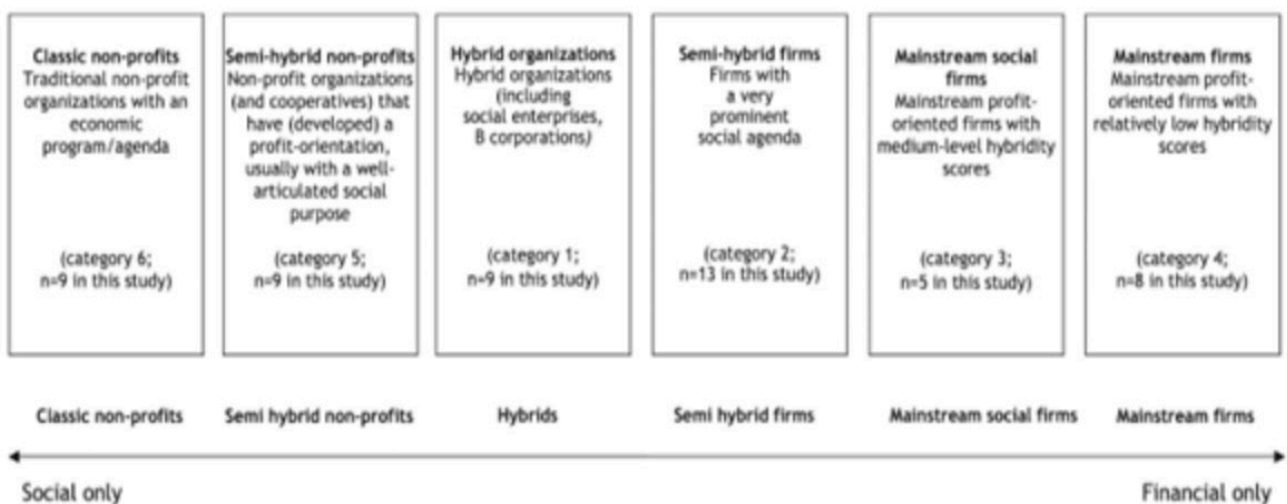


Figure 6. Hybrid continuum by Kolk and Lenfant (2016, p. 507)

A widely touched-on type of venture with transformative potential is the small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs), often referred to as small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The sample includes a proposal developed by Catic-Kajtazovic (2013) that highlights the importance of SMEs for the recovery and development of Bosnia & Herzegovina, representing a main pillar in the economy, producing 60% of the GDP and most new jobs. Despite that, there are inefficiencies in the government-led legal and institutional framework in supporting the propensity and growth of SMEs in Bosnia & Herzegovina. The proposal highlights the obstacles inhibiting the growth of SMEs, such as difficulty in SMEs accessing capital, unsupportive tax policies and administrative procedures, and the lack of implementation of systematic reform. Supported with a study on government's support on SMMES survival in northern Uganda, findings establish that government holds a crucial role in supporting determinants of SMMES' growth including business skills development, capital adequacy, access to finance, access to market, and entrepreneurial education (Candiya Bongomin et al., 2018; Catic-Kajtazovic, 2013).

Similarly, social capital is found to affect SMMES in post-conflict countries through its influence on the growth aspirations of SMME owners and managers (Efendic et al., 2015). Looking at Bosnia & Herzegovina as an ethnically complex post-conflict environment, studies found social capital most fragile and most needed in these contexts. The concept of social capital is divided in literature into two, one that perceives it on a macro-level as a nationwide shared characteristic (trust and reciprocity), and the other understands it at an individual-specific micro-level (social relations, social networks) (Efendic et al., 2015). This distinction is used to bring attention to the meso-level social capital that is more business-appropriable and relies not only on the network structure of an individual's social relations but also on the normative and cognitive elements that allow people to act collectively such as generalised trust (trust in unknown individuals) and institutionalised trust (trust in institutions). This is particularly significant in settings where weak institutions significantly affect institutional trust in the ecosystem, shaping the social

capital elements and limiting the development or growth of SMEs. Findings underscore that stronger business aspirations are prevalent in SMEs with managers who exhibit institutional trust, insinuating that institutional perspectives vary greatly between businesspeople in the same country depending on their environment. In contexts with weak institutions, ownership matters as owner-managers exhibit higher growth aspirations for their ventures. Efendic et al. (2015) claim that the framework provided in their study can apply to other post-conflict contexts, specifically ones that have suffered from ethnic hatred and violence and are in the case in the process of reconciliation. However, further research is needed to determine the latter.

The final form of ventures touched on is partnerships (Kolk & Lenfant, 2015), which could also happen on various levels, including micro (individual), meso (organisation), and macro (society) among internal stakeholders (within one organisation or one partnership) and external to partnering organisations. A typology of levels is introduced (local, national, international) at which collaboration in different forms of partnerships take place (philanthropic, transactional, engagement, transformative). In the context of post-conflict, philanthropic and transactional partnerships are seen to have limited understanding of local communities and lack consideration of the broader societal context, which categorises these two types as ill-suited for sustaining peace in post-war contexts. Instead, advocacy for engagement and transformative partnerships is encouraged due to their focus on engagement with the local context, multi-stakeholder dialogues/platforms, and enthusiasm for solving issues related to the conflict. Such ventures would yield actual transformative change and would be needed to aid the government in reconstructing a post-conflict context.

### ***Untapped diversity, equity, and inclusion***

The sample taps on various entrepreneurial profiles that could charge the ecosystem in post-conflict countries with transformative activities if empowered and considered by governments and policymakers. Entrepreneurs within the national

borders of specific countries are explored, such as farmers' entrepreneurial orientation in post-conflict countries and the potential they hold in advancing the agricultural sector through their own businesses if equipped with entrepreneurial skills (Pyysiäinen et al., 2011). Pyysiäinen et al. (2011) question the notion that accelerating agricultural modernization is concerned with farmers' lack of entrepreneurial skills. They argue that farmers' entrepreneurship when simplified to the concept of 'making things happen' finds great appeal among farmers (Pyysiäinen et al., 2011, p. 123). However, the extent to which farmers will adopt or internalize entrepreneurship discourse varies from that in business contexts due to farmers not being in settings where they believe such entrepreneurial skills are necessary. The authors conclude that 'changing the context in which individuals are asked to demonstrate skills could be a helpful way to build up new self-understandings' (Pyysiäinen et al., 2011, p. 125), making context consideration important in enhancing entrepreneurship. Therefore, entrepreneurs' discourse in the farm context should be considered a multi-faceted phenomenon that allows for the exploration of self-presentations and self-constructions of farmers. Such shifts focus on the subjectivity and life-world of farmers instead of the farm management research approach of focusing on the characteristics of the business.

More untapped potentials crucial for inclusive growth are women, youth, and migrants (Dileni Gunewardena, 2020). In a study that focuses on the phenomenon of youth and women entrepreneurs being a minority, Dileni Gunewardena (2020) explores what affects the low participation of these groups in a selection of countries across Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. In a systematic review of empirical contributions, the main themes impacting these groups are capital constraints, credit and information asymmetries shaped by discrimination against women, youth, and migrants, and risk aversion and tolerance. Few studies have explored how such factors affect women, youth, and migrants in post-war contexts. However, the studies examined in Dileni Gunewardena (2020)'s article highlight that these groups' low involvement in entrepreneurship indicates that developing and

post-conflict countries have rampant opportunities to improve economic and social conditions through creating policies and public programs to enhance inclusion.

Embracing entrepreneurs who relate to but reside outside the post-conflict context has various benefits. The review involves the diaspora (Efendic et al., 2015; Naudé, 2009; Williams, 2020) and transnational (in-between country of destination and country of origin) entrepreneurs (Santamaria-Alvarez et al., 2018) in the entrepreneurial ecosystem as a potential source for reconstruction and redevelopment of post-conflict countries. Diaspora's contributions span creating new firms, managing existing firms, and acting as sources of financial capital and knowledge resources. Transnational entrepreneurs, unlike the general diaspora, have the unique characteristic of maintaining linkages and ties to their home country while being abroad. Colombian transnational entrepreneurs are seen as agents of prosperous change in post-conflict Colombia, prompting the study of their human, social, and financial characteristics that drive their motivation to take part in transnational entrepreneurial activities (Santamaria-Alvarez et al., 2018). The findings show Colombia's transnational entrepreneurs belong to the diaspora elite, in terms of networks they are found to be fragmented and closed posing a potential challenge for policymakers to engage them. Nonetheless, they are also found to be strategic in building their social networks rather than relying on ethnic or family networks, which allows them to get access to resources they would not be able to otherwise. Limited work has been done to explore transnational entrepreneurs in other contexts, which limits the understanding surrounding transnational entrepreneurs and their potential in different contexts. Nevertheless, diaspora and transnational entrepreneurs both can be captured through policies that encourage involvement and investment in post-conflict countries (Naudé, 2009; Santamaria-Alvarez et al., 2018).

Inclusion is a particularly important element for TEEs as ecosystems with exclusive policies do not align with any measures of prosperity. In creating a divisive ecosystem, countries discourage

engagement, which will decelerate if not inhibit the peacebuilding and redevelopment. Studies have illustrated how managers of enterprises in ethnically diverse local areas, rather than fragmented and polarised between majority and minority, display higher growth aspirations (Efendic et al., 2015). Diversifying the ecosystem by ensuring support for minorities and underrepresented groups to initiate entrepreneurial activity is crucial to set post-war contexts on the pathway to prosperity. Comparably, the engagement of diaspora and transnational entrepreneurs in the development of their countries post-conflict contributes to peacebuilding in various aspects, from strengthening community and identity, enriching social capital and networks, to opportunity creation and knowledge sharing (Efendic et al., 2015; Naudé, 2009; Santamaria-Alvarez et al., 2018; Williams, 2020).

### ***Spatial environment in post-war context***

Residential neighbourhoods have become incubation hubs for small-scale businesses with many enterprises operating from home, which makes neighbourhoods and the built environment apart of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Therefore, exploring the potential impact the built environment and zoning regulations could have on entrepreneurial activity is an essential endeavour to conduce TEE in post-conflict countries for peacebuilding and prosperity. In that respect, studies have researched contrasting pre-war and post-war neighbourhoods in the Netherlands (Beckers & Kloosterman, 2014; Beckers & Sleutjes, 2014). Using exploratory research as an approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods, an analysis on the functionality of these neighbourhoods was done. Findings demonstrated that pre-war neighbourhoods are multifunctional compared to the post-war neighbourhoods built to be monofunctional to provide their inhabitants with recreational space around their individual homes (Beckers & Kloosterman, 2014). This resulted in pre-war neighbourhoods accommodating more entrepreneurial business and social activity. In comparing firm survival rates, to non-neighbourhood-oriented activities (not catering to the needs of local residents), survival rates of enterprises in pre-war neighbourhoods were

higher than in post-war neighbourhoods. As for the neighbourhood-oriented sectors, little difference in survival rates was distinguished, which is believed to be due to the little competition available in post-war neighbourhoods. Beckers and Sleutjes (2014) consider how these contrasting neighbourhoods and the different functions and zoning regulations affect firm mobility. However, their sample was restricted to non-locally oriented sectors, which limited the ability to compare other sectors. With that said, findings show that the built environment and zoning regulations affect mobility trajectories only to a lesser extent than expected; entrepreneurs and firms are driven to relocate mostly due to personal or firm-internal factors. However, post-war neighbourhoods are found to be more restrictive for the daily operations of entrepreneurs and enterprises in terms of social interaction and activity. This insinuates that policymakers are required to assess existing post-war neighbourhoods and their effect on entrepreneurial ecosystems to ensure a functional mix of urban structures conducive to transformative entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial ecosystems is curated.

### ***Skills development, realization, and job creation***

Conflicts often lead to a loss in human capital (through migrations, displacement, and death tolls), which greatly affects the capacity and capabilities of post-war contexts (Candiya Bongomin et al., 2018; Naudé, 2009). The sample emphasised the role of skills in post-conflict; their abundance or apprehension and their importance in developing entrepreneurial ecosystems, protecting livelihoods, maintaining peace, and furthering economic and social development. Large organisations and ventures, such as foreign firms and some hybrid organisations in post-conflict contexts, are found to either search for staff with social and empathy skills (Kolk & Lenfant, 2016) or invest in the skills development and education of local employees in these fragile contexts with the purpose (Gölgeci et al., 2021) of contributing to the peacebuilding and development of the country. Skills can be learnt, and policymakers can create training programs to ensure the acquisition and development of entrepreneurial skills, however, not all skills

correspond with specific entrepreneurship like farm entrepreneurship (Pyysiäinen et al., 2011). Some farmers find entrepreneurial skills not relevant to their work, due to the context within which they are asked to demonstrate these skills. Hence, engaging farmers with new social networks and contexts will help them find the relevance of entrepreneurial skills and intrinsically develop them (Pyysiäinen et al., 2011). Loss in human capital in conflict induces discussions on skills development, however, it is critical to expand understanding of transformative entrepreneurial needs to include understanding individuals' perceptions of entrepreneurial skills before approaching skills development policies and programs.

In enhancing the type of output ecosystems produce, consideration of skills that provide entrepreneurs with the means to create transformative long-term positive change innovatively is consequential. Daka and Siad (2022) focus on the importance of the education sector in Somalia to house education with a post-conflict development agenda. Specifically, universities are seen as a pivotal element in catalysing innovation through knowledge generation and diffusion. Through a policy approach, government can support the entrepreneurial ecosystem by aiding entrepreneurs, academia, and other actors through facilitating international connectivity among actors in the ecosystem and designing skills-building programmes to train key actors and equip them with the latest practices. Shevtsova et al. (2020) outline the risk of skilled workforce outflow in the case of conflicts and post-conflict, which was found to negatively impact countries with governments adopting the Smart Specialization approach. Hence, diaspora entrepreneurs are again highlighted as a critical resource in post-conflict countries regarding their knowledge-base and skills. Diaspora entrepreneurs who migrate away from conflict-hit and post-conflict countries in pursuit of education or employment opportunities contribute in terms of social remittances due to their education and employment experience in their host countries (Williams, 2020). Cupped with their familiarity of the local contexts, they can provide communities with the required skills and educational support.

Studies on social bricoleurs show that they possess local knowledge, which provides them with the ability to leverage the motivation, knowledge, skills, and resources needed to improve social well-being of their communities (Langevang & Namatovu, 2019). Knowledge-sharing and skill mobilization among community members in social bricolage is some of the, what is framed as positive, impacts of the social bricolage phenomenon, noting that it emerged to fill in institutional gaps. However, this notes that entrepreneurial skills are not lacking and therefore explorations on which aspects of skills need development and in what manner are needed.

Capacity building through offering specialized business trainings to instruct business ideas, knowledge, and skills among owners of SMMEs is essential to ensure their survival. Likewise, financial literacy is seen as important for business owners to manage their resources efficiently and make better-informed business decisions. These conclusions were drawn by on Candiya Bongomin et al. (2018)'s study in the Gulu District of Northern Uganda, making the results context-specific with the need for further research to validate the findings in other post-conflict regions both in Northern Uganda and beyond. In the SME proposal for Bosnia & Herzegovina, Catic-Kajtazovic (2013) highlights that 'entrepreneurship education and training' has not achieved any progress since the end of the conflict, which is attributed to the lack of advocacy SMEs have seen from governmental or institutional bodies. The proposal targets government and institutional reforms and frameworks to create an entrepreneurial climate, where entrepreneurial initiatives are rewarded and supported to provide incentives and the necessary skills to the entrepreneurs (Catic-Kajtazovic, 2013). This is set to incite and develop the entrepreneurial mindset that is believed to bridge the development gap resulting from the disintegration of large enterprises from the former Yugoslavia's system of socialism. The proposal's goal is to be achieved once institutional support for SMEs rises to a strategic level that considers such ventures generators of the required new jobs, investments and innovations that help Bosnia & Herzegovina flourish (Catic-Kajtazovic, 2013).

The built environment is also found to affect the circumstances when business skills are available and exercised (Beckers & Kloosterman, 2014). In cases such as post-war neighbourhoods in the Netherlands where business spaces are minimal, aspiring entrepreneurs with suitable skills and sufficient market demand will still not be able to initiate projects or business start-ups due to the lack of suitable business spaces. Therefore, a business-appropriate built environment, strong government and institutional frameworks, and venture support of entrepreneurial activities are essential for the culmination of skills and in turn post-war TEEs.

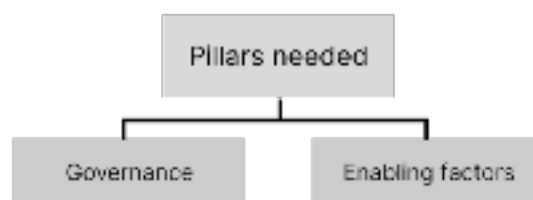
### 3.2.2 The key elements needed to nurture TE ecosystems

The literature review provided potential characteristics of a TEE in post-war and post-conflict contexts, while also proposing recommendations to maintain these characteristics. Since the reviewed articles spanned the policy and management disciplines, they have touched on fundamental elements needed to develop TEEs in post-war countries. The results of this inquiry were synthesized into two main divisions: governance and enabling factors (Figure 7). Governance is led through policy support and the trust and reconciliation environment that policy, institutions, and legal frameworks provide; while enabling factors to include elements and actors authors have examined as critical in nurturing entrepreneurial activity and ecosystems in post-conflict contexts.

#### Governance

Highlighted among all papers is the importance of

governance, including policy, institutional, and legal support in bringing forth the environment needed to cultivate TEEs. In ensuring that entrepreneurial activities contribute to 'productive', or 'constructive entrepreneurship' as referred to in TEEs, policies that focus on fostering and rewarding activities with positive social as well as economic impact are needed (Naudé, 2009). Also explored in the review is the importance of policies that support the inclusivity of various groups holding entrepreneurial potential, specifically youth, women, farmers, diaspora, and transnational entrepreneurs. The low participation of women and youth in entrepreneurship, particularly in countries like Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, is posed as an opportunity to utilize a resource with great capabilities to improve social and economic conditions of post-war countries (Dileni Gunewardena, 2020). Policymakers are called on to consider measures aiming to change the entrepreneurial behaviour of these groups and unleash their potential. In post-conflict contexts with significant migration due to conflict and ongoing economic and demographic challenges, policy engagement with diaspora communities presents another potential source of development (Williams, 2018, as cited in, Williams, 2020). Diaspora and transnational entrepreneurs can act as change agents in their home countries due to their intellectual, managerial, and financial capabilities (Santamaria-Alvarez et al., 2018). Through the right policies, government can instil institutional trust and suitable environment needed to encourage their constructive involvement (Daka & Siad, 2022; Naudé, 2009; Santamaria-Alvarez et al., 2018; Williams, 2020).



**Figure 7. Overview of the pillars needed to nurture transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems created by author.**

A prominent discourse in both policy and management papers is the power of skills recognition for members of post-conflict communities, including youth, women, and farmers. Policy support behind education, networking, and media coverage of success stories promotes the realization of entrepreneurial skills and mobilizes entrepreneurial behaviour among the mentioned groups (Dileni Gunewardena, 2020; Pyysiäinen et al., 2011). For example, training youth and women on credit counselling, financial management, and soft-skills is found to entice change in their entrepreneurial behaviour. Moreover, lack of 'national innovation systems' is perceived to weaken the enticement of change, technological advancement, and institutional strength (Daka & Siad, 2022; Naudé, 2009). Capacity and capability gaps are identified as barriers to innovations and the result of existing policy instrument vacuum (Daka & Siad, 2022). Therefore, policy that supports education and skills development has the power to nurture 'national innovation systems' that not only propagate knowledge but take part in its production (Daka & Siad, 2022; Naudé, 2009). Naudé (2009) explains that such systems promote radical innovation, which is needed as it is more effective at instigating change from inside the country and its economic system rather than incremental innovation, which only helps as a catching-up mechanism and is based on existing competencies and foreign direct investments (Metcalf, 2006, as cited in, Naudé, 2009). The latter helps in ensuring that change is happening in a manner that considers the context and works toward its prosperity.

An essential component of TEEs and contributor to constructive entrepreneurship is the Small and Medium-sized enterprise (SME) (Candiya Bongomin et al., 2018). The creation, growth, and survival of SMEs are seen to heavily rely on the existence of reliable governance and policy support and implementation. Catic-Kajtazovic (2013) has developed a proposal to improve institutional relationships between stakeholders in the development and support of SMEs in Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH) stating obstacles hindering the development of SMEs include (1) inadequate statistical support and the existence of the grey

economy, (2) financing constraints of SMEs, (3) discouraging tax policies and administrative procedures, and (4) poor implementation of policies for development. The proposal calls on state-level support of an institutional and legal framework for the development of SMEs through the following: 'Law on SMEs, Strategy of Development of SMEs, Agency for SMEs and a Fund for SMEs' (Catic-Kajtazovic, 2013, p. 1443), arguing that the absence of a state-level legal framework to organize available competencies and responsibilities will inhibit institutions from effectively developing entrepreneurship and SMEs.

Improving the access of women and youth to credit through a reduction in capital constraints is one policy implication seen salient to increase their involvement and the creation of SMEs. Dileni Gunewardena (2020) found that women and youth tend to operate in smaller firms, arguing that policy must better target the public programs curated to fund their microenterprises. Candiya Bongomin et al. (2018) advance the notion that government support is essential in developing the determinants of SMEs survivals including business skills, capital adequacy, access to finance, and entrepreneurial education. Evidently, the lack of policy and institutions supporting SMEs will negatively affect the nourishment TEEs as they often comprise a significant proportion of constructive enterprises, particularly in developing countries (Candiya Bongomin et al., 2018; Catic-Kajtazovic, 2013; Naudé, 2009).

In post-conflict contexts, policies are performed on an ad hoc basis, whereas bigger countries that are more stable have tailored policies aimed at bringing back home skilled migrants to fill managerial and/or entrepreneurial gaps (Williams, 2020). Social remittances offered by diaspora entrepreneurs are important in impacting growth in homeland, with some placing more emphasis on them than financial remittances. It is particularly important to note that if the diaspora returnees are not highly skilled, the benefits from social remittances are less easy to capture. However, coordinated policies can help ensure that the transfer of knowledge is maximised for stakeholders involved (both the diaspora and those receiving investment) and that the knowledge



from this can be shared and put into practice in other contexts (Berry, 1997, as cited in Williams, 2020, p. 58).

An underlying element affecting the nurturing of TEEs is the perception of the general and institutional environment in post-conflict contexts for the diaspora, foreign firms, and local communities. While institutional voids can result in specific types of transformative entrepreneurial activity as mentioned in section 3.2.1 (social bricolage, foreign firms' investments, hybrid firms, etc), a positive perception of the institutional environment affects the propensity of entrepreneurship with positive impact and avoids the overlapping of state and private-sector responsibilities (Gölgeci et al., 2021; Kolk & Lenfant, 2016). Trust is considered the primary condition for a positive perception, including generalised (among communities) and institutional (among communities and institutions) trust. Low trust environments can hinder entrepreneurship due to their damaging effect on the growth aspirations of entrepreneurs. With low trust environments, entrepreneurs might launch ventures but when the perceived risks associated with expansion are high, ventures will remain low scale with limited impact. Lack of generalised and institutional trust pushes away foreign direct investments (FDIs) and the diaspora; both are important in providing funds and intellectual capital that encourage local entrepreneurial activity. Lower uncertainty and government stability give rise to public sector investment projects and crowd in private sector investment (Naudé, 2009). Therefore, the establishment of rules, regulations, policy reforms, and effective policy implementation are important governance objectives to fortify both generalised and institutional trust among communities to result in a preferred environment for full-scale transformative enterprises (Efendic et al., 2015; Naudé, 2009).

Entrepreneurship remains an under-researched subject in post-conflict contexts, making the lack of data a constraint on policy development for pro-growth entrepreneurship for post-conflict countries (Naudé, 2009). Transformative entrepreneurship is similarly under-researched, requiring even further attention when considering governance

and policy design intended for the prosperity of post-war countries. Nevertheless, policy reforms are continuously seen as an essential element in reducing uncertainty and promoting institutional improvements that are necessary for the development of post-war countries toward prosperity (Naudé, 2009). This is evident in the number of discussions covered in the review around the importance of governance and policy in tapping on, organizing, and supporting unleashed entrepreneurial potential.

### ***Enabling factors***

The reviewed studies have recognized various factors that enable the nurturement of TEEs, including human resources, social capital, financial capital, and physical infrastructure. Human resources entail community members with the capacity for entrepreneurial behaviour. Supported through education, skills development programs, capacity building, and self-realization of entrepreneurial ability (Gölgeci et al., 2021; Kolk & Lenfant, 2016; Pyysiäinen et al., 2011), post-conflict countries can mobilize the human resources needed for the sustainability of TEEs. Studies have highlighted the importance of skills recognition among farmers, and how their perceptions of self and the contexts they are in affect their entrepreneurial behaviour; concluding that when surrounded with entrepreneurship-practice supporting environments, they are more likely to find value in utilizing their entrepreneurial skills (Pyysiäinen et al., 2011). Youth are also seen as enabling factors, such as in the case of the social bricolage phenomenon in post-conflict Uganda, where they are observed as community and resource mobilizers contributing toward peacebuilding and prosperity (Langevang & Namatovu, 2019). Similarly, women and diaspora are among the human resources found salient in enabling TEEs.

Social capital in post-conflict countries is a fundamental enabling factor for TEE development due to its importance in limiting the consequences of conflict through the reconstruction of social ties. Studies in Bosnia & Herzegovina and Colombia have repeatedly highlighted the value diaspora

and transnational entrepreneurs bring to their home communities, even where fragmented social networks exist, making them an essential part of the development of their country's social capital (Efendic et al., 2015; Naudé, 2009). They are found to be able to build strategic networks that can help procure funds and create technical communities that cross national borders allowing for knowledge sharing and networking (Santamaria-Alvarez et al., 2018; Williams, 2020). Similarly, foreign firms are seen as valuable actors in a conflict-hit country's social capital for their ability to establish legitimacy 'through social value creation and the development of social connection and localised social capital with local stakeholders to create social and economic value' (Gölgeci et al., 2021, p. 7). Thus, social capital also depends on trust, making the governance pillar a crucial supporting factor for a TEE-nurturing social capital.

In addition to the social remittances offered by social capital, post-conflict TEEs require financial means to enable the rise of impactful transformative enterprises. Whether in easy access to credit, venture capital funding, state financial assistance, or personal funds, financial capital plays a role in the rise of TEEs, particularly in activating untapped human potential and SMEs (Candiya Bongomin et al., 2018; Dileni Gunewardena, 2020). Access to microcredit programmes like Grameen Bank (Naudé, 2009) is encouraged in post-conflict countries, and financial education on these programs is perceived as consequential. Although some might argue that previous examples of microcredit have not worked in developed countries, little research has been done on these programmes in Africa, posing it as an essential point for further consideration (Naudé, 2009). The latter insinuates 'sufficient understanding on the role of finance in post-conflict state is still lacking' while encouraging further research to clarify the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and finance, capital requirements for start-ups in post-conflict and fragile states, context-specific forms of finance most appropriate for different situations, and the need for enterprise funding (Naudé, 2009, p. 260-262).

The final enabling factor recognized is the physical

infrastructure of post-war neighbourhoods and its ability to match entrepreneurs and opportunities. Physical environmental settings are found to affect: 1. Firm survival rate 2. Location and rent, cost-saving potential, firm accessibility, availability of parking space 3. Entrepreneurs' perceptions of social interactions and disturbance, local policies and relations with local authorities (Beckers & Kloosterman, 2014). From learnings developed in comparing the built environment and spatial order of pre-war and post-war residential neighbourhoods in the Netherlands, enabling entrepreneurial activity requires a shift away from restrictive monofunctional neighbourhoods adopted in the post-war urban planning (Beckers & Kloosterman, 2014; Beckers & Sleutjes, 2014). Social capital is a main motive for entrepreneurial behaviour, even among migrant communities, and is directly affected by the built environment that bounds it. Improving market access and transport networks are also among the intermediaries facilitating entrepreneurial activity (Naudé, 2009). Research on the importance of building neighbourhoods while considering spatial orders that encourage rather than hinder the matching of aspiring entrepreneurs and opportunities remains minimal. However, it is particularly salient as described since the physical infrastructure is vital in primarily conceiving and then developing TEEs. This factor is driven by policy and governance, as Beckers and Kloosterman (2014) and Beckers and Sleutjes (2014) present recommendations, based on their findings, for policymakers to consider in urban and zoning regulations.

Alongside governance, the above-mentioned enabling factors provide the space for creating and developing TEEs that contribute toward achieving prosperity and peacebuilding in post-war contexts. These enabling factors require the synonymous existence of one another to ensure the rise of activities that nurture prosperity-contributing TEEs. Nevertheless, authors have conducted their research while highlighting the lack of overall explorations of entrepreneurship policies and enabling factors for post-war contexts and the extent to which they affect the entrepreneurial activity and the creation of entrepreneurial ecosystems. Moreover, investigations into transformative entrepreneurship

for prosperity and peacebuilding are needed to support and substantiate the minimal research available thus far.

### 3.2.3 How transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems drive prosperity in post-war contexts

The review provided observations on the contributions of the identified TEE characteristics

in driving prosperity in post-conflict contexts. A thematic analysis along with the help of NVivo 12, allowed for the mapping of potential benefits of TEEs in post-conflict countries against IGP's prosperity index. Through a matrix coding query, Table 2 was created, which shows what aspects of the IGP prosperity index the literature touches on with the number of stated contributions per prosperity measure.

**Table 2. Matrix showing literature authors and connection to aspects of prosperity in post-war contexts**

Literature/Prosperity Aspect	Foundations of prosperity	Belonging, identities, & cultures	Health & healthy environments	Opportunities & aspirations	Power, voice, & influence	Peacebuilding	Number of elements mentioned
1: Beckers and Kloosterman (2014)	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
2: Beckers and Sleutjes (2014)	6	1	1	2	1	1	6
3: Candiva Bongomin et al. (2018)	2	0	0	1	0	0	2
4: Daka and Siad (2022)	6	2	2	3	1	6	6
5: De Waal (2020)	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
6: Dileni Gunewardena (2020)	6	3	2	2	0	1	5
7: Efenjic et al. (2015)	0	1	1	1	0	1	4
8: Pyytiäinen et al. (2011)	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
9: Güllüoğlu et al. (2021)	4	0	2	5	1	6	5
10: Kolk and Lenfant (2015)	2	2	0	1	1	2	5
11: Kolk and Lenfant (2016)	2	1	1	2	1	4	6
12: Langevang and Namukuru (2019)	4	3	1	2	0	0	4
13: Naudé (2009)	2	2	0	2	0	2	4
14: Čatic-Kaitazovic (2013)	2	0	0	2	0	1	3
15: Santamaria-Alvarez et al. (2018)	4	4	0	6	0	0	3
16: Shevtsova et al. (2020)	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
17: Williams (2020)	2	2	0	2	0	0	3
<b>Total mentions</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>Count of mentions</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25</b>	

In looking into post-conflict contexts, one of the main aims of entrepreneurial activities, ventures, and entrepreneurs is to impart or advance the 'peacebuilding' (Daka & Siad, 2022; De Waal, 2020; Efendic et al., 2015; Gölgeci et al., 2021; Kolk & Lenfant, 2015, 2016; Naudé, 2009; Santamaria-Alvarez et al., 2018; Shevtsova et al., 2020). Although not part of the IGP prosperity index, having been mentioned various times across the literature, peacebuilding was positioned as an essential sixth element in achieving prosperity in the explored contexts (as shown in Table 2).

As illustrated in Table 2, each article has touched on at least two prosperity elements, showing that

entrepreneurial activity has the potential to drive the prosperity of countries in at least two aspects. Over 50% of the articles touched on four or more prosperity elements, with the remaining touching on three or fewer. Moreover, each of these primary elements is an aggregate of sub-elements (as shown in Figure 1 and Table 3), often relative to the specific context or country for which this prosperity measure is being considered. The underlying themes for 'peacebuilding' are adopted from De Coning (2013) due to their relevance in post-conflict peacebuilding.

**Table 3. IGP prosperity elements in addition to 'peacebuilding' with their descriptions against the review results**

Prosperity measure	Description	Results review	Mentions
<b>1 - Foundations of prosperity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality &amp; secure jobs</li> <li>• Household security &amp; affordability</li> <li>• Inclusion &amp; fairness</li> <li>• Local value creation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skills for job security, growth, innovation</li> <li>- Foster creation of more SMEs</li> <li>- Job &amp; wealth creation</li> <li>- Improved equity &amp; inclusivity</li> <li>- Savings and lending groups</li> <li>- Mobilizing resources like youth skills</li> <li>- Flow of ideas of value for local contexts</li> <li>- Channel profit to address social <u>needs</u></li> <li>- Affordable business spaces</li> <li>- Areas of vitality, local amenities</li> </ul>	<b>15/17</b>
<b>2 - Belonging, identities, &amp; culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social relationships</li> <li>• Sense of community</li> <li>• Identities &amp; cultures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Re-establishing community ties</li> <li>- Expand network with people <u>abroad</u></li> <li>- Preserving values, rediscovering traditions</li> <li>- Supporting peers; savings and lending groups</li> <li>- Experience and knowledge sharing</li> <li>- Strengthen social <u>capital</u></li> <li>- Provide social remittances</li> </ul>	<b>11/17</b>
<b>3 - Health &amp; healthy environments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy bodies &amp; mind</li> <li>• Healthy, safe, &amp; secure neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Childhood &amp; adolescence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spaces to nurture and encourage <u>activity</u></li> <li>- Rebuild <u>livelihoods</u></li> <li>- Foster peace &amp; safety</li> <li>- Improve <u>wellbeing</u></li> <li>- Material and social support for child mothers and orphans</li> <li>- Improvement in quality of life &amp; health</li> <li>- Funds to build health posts</li> </ul>	<b>8/17</b>

<b>4 - Opportunities &amp; aspirations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality basic education</li> <li>• Lifelong learning</li> <li>• Autonomy &amp; freedom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skills formation for long-term sustainability</li> <li>- Address complex societal <u>challenges</u></li> <li>- Build capacity for economic &amp; social <u>stability</u></li> <li>- Fund developments (schools, wells, etc.)</li> <li>- Skills development &amp; realization</li> <li>- Mature skilled &amp; technical communities</li> <li>- Aspirations for growth</li> <li>- Poverty reduction</li> <li>- Strengthening agricultural &amp; educational sectors</li> </ul>	<b>15/17</b>
<b>5 - Power, voice, &amp; influence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political inclusion</li> <li>• Voice &amp; influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promoting interaction among leaders, institutions, civil society</li> <li>- Local social cohesion</li> <li>- Sharing of risks &amp; responsibilities to address societal problems</li> </ul>	<b>5/17</b>
<b>6 - Peacebuilding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict prevention</li> <li>• Conflict management</li> <li>• Post-conflict reconciliation (De Coning, 2013)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peace engineering through skill <u>development</u></li> <li>- Fostering dialogue</li> <li>- Concrete learning &amp; capacity building</li> <li>- Elevate socioeconomic <u>status</u></li> <li>- Competency development for long-term sustainability</li> <li>- Aim for economic <u>stability</u></li> <li>- Reduce community <u>tensions</u></li> <li>- Utilize idle youth <u>resources</u></li> <li>- Foreign direct investment</li> <li>- Embracing innovation</li> <li>- Responding to social challenges</li> </ul>	<b>10/17</b>

### *Foundations of Prosperity*

Most contributions that potential TEEs seem to make are to the ‘Foundations of prosperity’ and ‘Opportunities & aspirations’ with 88% of literature enacting benefits in that regard. TEEs focus on skills (nurture and development) due to their ability to provide job security, growth, and innovation, making them a necessary constituent in the process of prosperity. A TEE is also supportive of the development and growth of SMEs, which also fosters the creation of more SMEs as it stimulates the initiation of such ventures with similar purposes and provides further opportunities (Candiya

Bongomin et al., 2018; Catic-Kajtazovic, 2013). Other hybrid organisations and foreign firms were seen taking part in prosperity measures by channelling profits for the development of essential entities and to address social challenges.

Establishing TEEs that are inclusive of groups including the diaspora (Naudé, 2009; Williams, 2020), transnational (Santamaria-Alvarez et al., 2018), and side-lined groups like women and youth will lead to an environment of improved equity and inclusivity. This also encourages the sharing and flow of ideas that would provide locals with the mindset and knowledge to support local value creation.

Social bricolage was discussed as having a salient role in improving community collaboration and social capital, affecting job security, and inclusion, while harnessing the local value creation (Efendic et al., 2015; Langevang & Namatovu, 2019; Williams, 2020). In mobilising peers and resources and supporting community members, social bricolage can contribute to the foundations of prosperity.

### **Opportunities and Aspirations**

‘Opportunities and aspirations’ are touched on through the mention of policies that support SMEs and their survival, which affects the prospects of owners’ aspirations. Operations of foreign and hybrid organisations contribute to support lifelong learning opportunities. Additionally, adopting the Smart Specialization development approach plays a role in promoting the autonomy and freedom of a nation by capitalizing on its strengths. Investing in the Science, Technology, and Innovation ecosystem through education and production of knowledge can also yield lifelong learning opportunities for the country.

### **Remaining elements**

Around 65% of the sample indicated impact contributing to ‘Belonging, identities, & culture’ as seen in Table 3, these included elements that strengthen social capital, community ties, and cultural identity. Such factors instil agency in community members, allowing them to take part in social and entrepreneurial activities. As for ‘peacebuilding’, 59% discussed entrepreneurial activities contributing to conflict-prevention and management and post-conflict reconciliation. Entrepreneurial activities in conflict and post-conflict are both affecting and affected by contextual factors (Langevang & Namatovu, 2019), therefore requiring peacebuilding to sustain constructive entrepreneurship and vice versa. In this way, peacebuilding presents itself as an essential prosperity element. A similar case should be noted when considering prosperity elements; transformative entrepreneurial activities targeting prosperity are highly dependent on the availability of suitable contextual conditions and characteristics of entrepreneurs that provide the space to yield

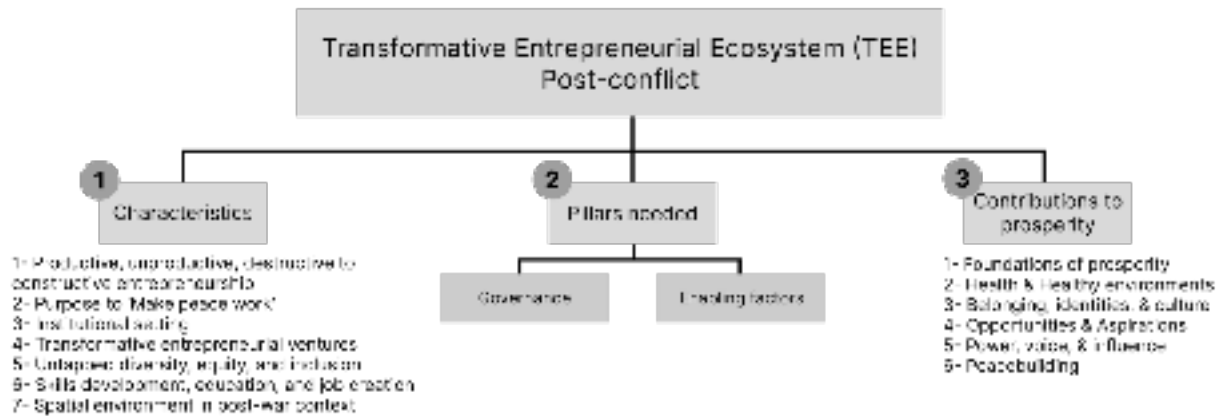
that impact. Further details on prosperity impact with remaining prosperity elements are found in Table 3.

## **3.3 CONCLUSIONS OF SYSTEMATIC REVIEW**

The systematic review spanned articles with various objectives, from policy to management and urban planning recommendations. The studies explored entrepreneurial phenomena in conflict-hit and post-conflict contexts including outcomes and purposes, venture types, entrepreneurs, and the general environment. Through the pre-defined research questions, I was able to synthesize characteristics of TEEs, along with the pillars needed to curate and support them to provide the sought-after benefits of prosperity and peacebuilding. The findings have provided us with an overall conceptual framework defined through research on TEEs in post-conflict contexts thus far. A summary of the conclusions answering the review research questions is illustrated in Figure 8.

The characteristics of TEEs synthesised in the review proposed ‘constructive entrepreneurship’ as the primary outcome of transformative entrepreneurial activities, with the ultimate purpose focused on ‘peacebuilding’, notwithstanding the particularity of the ‘institutional setting’, forms of ‘transformative entrepreneurial ventures’, ‘untapped’ human potential, ‘skills development’ discourse, and the ‘physical spatial environment’. In seeking to create TEEs that contribute to peacebuilding and prosperity, two main pillars were identified as essential to nurture such ecosystems in post-conflict conditions: governance and enabling factors. In showcasing the potential impact of TEEs, a significant effect was determined by the characterised TEEs on the IGP prosperity index, with the addition of ‘peacebuilding’ as a new separate category unique for post-conflict contexts.

Based on the sample, research considering the concept of TEEs and their related definitions remains limited, even more so in post-conflict contexts. Additionally, there is a clear bias toward African and Eastern European countries in post-



*Figure 8. Overview of the conceptual framework by author.*

conflict transformative entrepreneurship research. The review considers articles with mostly small-scale study, with many explorations focusing on a specific region in a named country and certain limited phenomenon, affecting the potential for generalisations due to the distinctiveness of each post-conflict situation. Studies are also not directly related to socially, environmentally, or sustainability-focused enterprises and attempts are needed to bring such ventures and entrepreneurs into focus to explore their impact on the prosperity of their communities. The authors present various policy recommendations with a clear understanding of the importance of policy discourse. Nevertheless, the sample does not present cases where policies have been implemented in post-war countries to determine their success or failure or where authorities have provided the means for entrepreneurial ecosystems to rise. Additionally, most research links entrepreneurial activities to peacebuilding and economic growth, with little specific to sustainable development or the UN 2030 Agenda. Finally, this systematic review stands as a starting point in comprehending how TEEs are represented in post-conflict, the pillars needed to nurture them, and how they influence prosperity



## 4. FINAL REMARKS

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In an era where the world faces unprecedented social and environmental challenges, the concept of 'transformative entrepreneurship' arises as a potential sustainable development tool that can help decipher world challenges whilst enhancing local and global prosperity. While the notion remains underdeveloped due to the multidimensionality of entrepreneurship itself and the lack of published works, considerations of transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems in and for post-conflict countries remain slight. The main aim of this dissertation was to understand the potential of transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems in contributing to the prosperity of post-conflict contexts through a systematic review. The result agreeably places transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems as salient for post-war peacebuilding and prosperity.

The review has provided certain attributes characterising transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems in post-conflict contexts while illustrating the pillars needed to cultivate them and examples of how they contribute to prosperity. It showed that TEEs in post-conflict are distinct from the more stable contexts due to the consequences of conflict on peace, institutions, social fabric, and infrastructure. Peacebuilding appeared as a prominent objective and outcome for most entrepreneurial activities; an important element affecting and affected by the contextual factors of the conflict and post-conflict situation. Additional outcomes of TEEs corresponded to IGP's prosperity index, proving their positive potential with benefits that included skills development and capacity building, creation of job opportunities, preservation of culture and values, improvement of dialogue among state and communities, and prevention of violence.

The idea of 'skills' including development, education, and recognition attracted the attention of multiple authors, and ventures, from the reviewed literature. Its importance was highlighted repeatedly in various discussions especially as foreign firms, hybrid enterprises, and policy explorations alluded to it as key in unleashing entrepreneurial potential.

However, examples such as the social bricolage in Uganda and partnerships developed across the local, national, and international levels in African countries implied that entrepreneurial skills are not lacking. Rather, certain contextual conditions such as the economic, social, or institutional setting within which individuals find themselves can induce or diminish their entrepreneurial drive. Skills require development and capacity building remains important for acquiring the latest knowledge and best practices. However, ensuring that ecosystems provide encouraging contextual conditions and collective means for people to find the confidence to showcase their skills and entrepreneurial motives is fundamental. The latter is visible when reliable governance and enabling factors needed to create TEEs are present.

The general approach to TEE research is positive, even praising outcomes of entrepreneurial initiatives resulting from institutional gaps and the lack of resources faced by post-war communities. As in the example of social bricolage research in Uganda, various benefits of the phenomenon are highlighted. While such local initiatives might serve communities better than a struggling state that might not understand local needs, efforts to uplift livelihoods, foster inclusivity, and alleviate poverty should not fall on conflict-afflicted communities. Recognising the reasons behind such phenomenon is necessary to consider in future research to ensure reasonable allocation of responsibilities. Entrepreneurial attempts will exist, in every context, but it is important to identify, understand, and explore them for the best way to organize these efforts into constructive activities that benefit stakeholders, avoid social, environmental, and other externalities, and ensure the impact is wholly positive.

Large emphasis was placed on policy research considering it holds authoritative power in instigating reforms. However, little research has been done on entrepreneurship policy implementation in post-conflict contexts. Similarly, considerations of existing policies and their inefficiencies are equally important in understanding whether it is a matter

of lack of policies, weak policy implementation, or absence of suitable policies. In establishing such foundations, policymakers can better design policies to yield the desired outcomes for TEEs. Researchers must advance TE and TEEs research in post-conflict countries to provide policymakers with the knowledge and framework for future policy.

The reviewed research poses a limitation in the reliability of the findings due to the evident regional bias in the research. Most papers have focused on Africa and Eastern Europe; two regions differing culturally and contextually from one another and other post-conflict contexts such as those present in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and South America. The resulting lack of exploration is potentially attributed to the difficulty of conducting empirical research in these areas and procuring reliable data. This has seemingly led to the reviewed research being small-scaled, making it difficult to infer generalisations due to the peculiarities of each conflict, context, history, and culture. The latter presents an opportunity for further research that considers the idiosyncrasies and commonalities of each condition, such as that of Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Colombia, and others.

Another limitation is evident in the varied topics studied and research designs adopted by the sample of articles. Lack of data coupled with inconsistency in research methods and design across studies affects the quality of outcomes we're drawing on and the extent to which they can be generalisable. A better understanding of TEEs and their potential impact on prosperity can be developed with more synonymous research that covers additional and wider regions.

The concepts of 'transformative entrepreneurship' and 'transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems' as defined in this paper remain contemporary among the researched articles and largely under-explored in the peculiar context of post-conflict. Studies on social, environmental, or sustainable entrepreneurship with impact on prosperity and peacebuilding in post-conflict remain similarly limited, raising concerns on the unification of definitions and the reliability of generalisations

based on existing literature. Nevertheless, transformative entrepreneurship's current definition does not consider post-conflict contexts, positioning this paper as a novel contribution to the field.

The findings of the review propose that entrepreneurial activity in post-conflict contexts is distinct. The little work that has been done in recognizing prosperity-contributing 'transformative enterprises' or transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems in post-conflict contexts presents practitioners and policymakers with limited findings for practice. This suggests that opportunities for further research are abundant, especially with the geographical gaps and methodological inconsistencies identified. Therefore, future research should consider these opportunities through different disciplines while advancing research in policy, management, and urban development.

While results have shown that there is potential for prosperity-contributing transformative entrepreneurship to rise faster in post-war contexts because of the need for peacebuilding, transformative entrepreneurship can possess contradictory definitions. One that is positive, led by examples from the developed world, and one that is negative or destructive often influenced by the violent consequences war inflicts on communities. As Wim Naudé (2009) explains, entrepreneurship is not particularly good or bad, or intrinsically one or the other, which makes context consideration important to ensure the advancement of desired constructive entrepreneurship. The extent to which TEEs be a positive driving force towards peacebuilding and prosperity remains unknown; requiring further studies to first, bound the concept with clear definitions based on empirical research, and second to comprehensively determine its wholistic impact on local and global prosperity. This dissertation concludes that transformative entrepreneurship holds strong potential to sustainably develop post-conflict countries whilst influencing local and global prosperity, but further awareness of different and specific contexts and the elements affecting their entrepreneurial activity is essential to cultivate prosperity-contributing transformative entrepreneurial ecosystems.

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# APPENDIX

## A1. Full list of records reviewed based on search query, retrieved from Web of Science

	Included in final review
	Included but could not be accessed/needs translation
	Not included
Author Full Names	Article Title
<del>Daka, Ephraim; Siad, Sadiya, A.</del>	Entrepreneurship and the innovation ecosystem policy: A case study in post-conflict Somalia
Williams, Nick	Moving beyond financial remittances: The evolution of diaspora policy in post-conflict economies
<del>van der Veen, Rikke; Datzberger, Simone</del>	The peacebuilding potential of technical and vocational education and training programmes in post-conflict Sierra Leone
<del>Eongomin, George Okello; Candhya, Munene, John C.; Ntanyi, Joseph Mpeera; Malinga, Charles Akol</del>	Determinants of SMMEs growth in post-war communities in developing countries: Testing the interaction effect of government support
<del>Lisymenko, V.; Pashyna, N.; Sierichniak, K.; Hrechana, S.; Zablodska, D.</del>	Conceptual Content of Infrastructural Support for the Development of Post-conflict Territories of Luhansk Region in the War Conflict and Pandemic conditions
<del>Sestic, Munira; Ibrahimagic, Sabina</del>	Business Problems in a Women's Small Entrepreneurship – The Bosnia and Herzegovina Case of Post Conflict and Transition Context
<del>Olguin, E.; Valdez, L.; Gutierrez, J.</del>	Use of the Chess Model of Change Management for the Teaching of Engineering in the Post-conflict Colombia
<del>Efendic, Adnan; Mickiewicz, Tomasz; Rebmann, Anna</del>	Growth aspirations and social capital: Young firms in a post-conflict environment
Naude, Wim	Entrepreneurship, Post-Conflict
<del>Exulcocha, Steyina U.; Ugbah, Steve D.</del>	Entrepreneurship Education <u>As</u> A Catalyst for Recovery in North Eastern Nigeria
<del>Ricciardelli, Alessandra</del>	The Role of Universities in The Pursuit of Local Community Empowerment, Sustainable, Smart, and Inclusive Development in Resilient Communities – A Comparison Analysis of Post-Conflict Croatia and Kosovo
<del>Langemann, Thilde; Namatovu, Rebecca</del>	Social bricolage in the aftermath of war
<del>Shevtsova, Hanna; Shvets, Nataliia; Kravcheninova, Maia; Pchelynska, Hanna</del>	In Search of Smart Specialization to Ensure the Sustainable Development of the Post-Conflict Territory: <u>the</u> Case of the Luhansk Region in Ukraine
<del>Bajacui, Ilin; Sultan, Suhail</del>	A Model of Development for Regions Towards <u>A</u> Post-Conflict Period. The Case of The Dead Sea and The Jordan Valley
<del>Halhash, Ruslan; Semenenko, Inna; Ousharenko, Ievgen; Borova, Ganna</del>	Innovative Forms of Realization of Regional Social Policy by Organizing Public Dialogue and Communication in Conditions of Post-conflict Transformation in Eastern Ukraine



Callejas Campo, Cristina	Success Factors of the <b>Asociacion de Tecnologos y Productores de Bilbao (Asotbilbao)</b> , a Post-Conflict Associative Company
Calvo, Sara; Morales, Andres; Zikidis, Yanni	The Social and Solidarity Economy in Post-Conflict Sub-Saharan Africa Changing Attitudes and Approaches to Development
Beckers, Pascal; Kloosterman, Robert C.	Open to Business? An Exploration of the Impact of the Built Environment and Zoning Plans on Local Businesses in Pre-war and Post-war Residential Neighbourhoods in Dutch Cities
Mamyachenkov, Vladimir Nikolayevich	State of Construction Sector of Economy of Sverdlovsk Region in 1945-1950
Milena Santamaria-Alvarez, Sandra; Carolina Munoz-Castro, Diana; Angelica Sarmiento-Gonzalez, Maria; Isabel Marin-Zapata, Sara	Fragmented networks and transnational entrepreneurship: Building strategies to prosper in challenging surroundings
Gunewardena, Dileni; Seck, Abdoulaye	Heterogeneity in entrepreneurship in developing countries: Risk, credit, and migration and the entrepreneurial propensity of youth and women
Rader, Karen A.	Alexander hollaender's postwar vision for biology: Oak ridge and beyond
Pyysiainen, Jarkko; Halpin, Darren; Vesala, Kari Mikko	Entrepreneurial skills among farmers: approaching a policy discourse
Golgeci, Ismail; Arslan, Ahmad; Khan, Zaheer; Kontkanen, Minnie	Foreign firm operations and skills development of local employees in violence-hit countries
Johnson, Samuel Wai, Jr.	Determinants of Access to Credit: Evidence from a Fragile Conflict-Affected Setting
Zanecchia, Armando L.	<b>Tobacco Dependency, Sustainable Agriculture, and Regional Food Security – A Case Study in Malawi</b>
Etzkowitz, Henry	Silicon Valley at risk? Sustainability of a global innovation icon: An introduction to the Special Issue
Dalton, Bronwen; dela Rama, Marie	Business Ethics During Mixed Modes of Exchange: South Korean Chaebol's Succession Challenge
Cremer, RD; de Bruin, A; Dupuis, A	International sister-cities - Bridging the global-local divide
Maclean, Mairi; Harvey, Charles; Suddaby, Roy	Institutional biography and the institutionalization of a new organizational template: Building the global branded hotel chain
Ivankovic, Marko; Bojncic, Stefan; Kolega, Ante; Selak, Vjekoslav	<b>Economic and social role of agriculture in the federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>
Bedoya-Dorado, Cristian; Castro-Pena, Monica; Hoyos-Bravo, Alexandra	<b>Rural entrepreneurship in peacebuilding: Analysis of (Dis) Articulation in Valle del Cauca, Colombia</b>



<del>Catic, Kajtažović, Elvira</del>	Proposal for institutional relationships among stakeholders in the development and support of small and medium enterprises in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Kolk, Ans; <del>Lenfant, Francois</del>	Partnerships for peace and Development in Fragile States: Identifying Missing Links
<del>Wieczorek, Anna J.</del>	Sustainability transitions in developing countries: Major insights and their implications for research and policy
de Waal, Alex	Somalia's disassembled state: clan unit formation and the political marketplace
<del>Besgul, Bora; Ozoflu, Melek Aylin</del>	Rethinking the Neoliberal Prescriptions of State-building: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina
<del>Twijnstra, Rens; Titeca, Kristof</del>	Everything changes to remain the <u>same</u> ? State and tax reform in South Sudan
Kolk, Ans; <del>Lenfant, Francois</del>	Hybrid business models for peace and reconciliation
<del>Mamyachenkov, Vladimir Nikolayevich</del>	Sverdlovsk Region Subsidiary Farms of Enterprises and Organizations: Crisis of 1945-1953
<del>Beckers, Pascal; Sleutjes, Bart</del>	Neighbourhood Spatial Order, the Local <u>Economy</u> and Firm Mobility in Urban Areas of the Netherlands
<del>Rzayeva, Inara</del>	Transformation of the World Monetary System from the Gold Standard to the Cryptocurrency

**A2. List of selected articles for the systematic literature review with the author, title, year published, type of study, research methods, country of study, continent, discipline, summary, and main topic of study.**

Number	Author	Article Title	Year	Type of Study	Methods	Country of Study	Continent	Discipline	Main subject/summary	Key
1	Davis, Catherine; Bao, Sergio A.	Entrepreneurship and the environment: a case study in post-conflict Colombia	2022	Empirical	Qualitative	Colombia	Asia	Policy	Explores the impact of post-conflict reconstruction on the environment and how this environment affects entrepreneurship and innovation in a post-conflict business context.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem
2	Wahana, Rai	Moving beyond financial instruments: The analysis of digital policy in post-conflict economies	2020	Empirical	Qualitative	Burma, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan	Europe	Policy	Highlights the impact of including digital technology in policy development because of potential to foster transformative entrepreneurship in post-conflict economies.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship ecosystem, social stream
3	Demergut, George Ghazi; Gendryk, Marcin; Jais, O.; Maly, Joseph; Muzina, Michal; Chytrý, Ondřej	Determinants of SMEs' growth in postwar economies in developing countries: Testing the innovation effect of government support	2016	Empirical	Quantitative	Spain, Mexico, Africa	Africa	Policy	Examines the importance of government support in the relationship between business skills, social inequality, access to finance, climate in market, entrepreneurial activities, and SMEs' growth in post-war economies in Northern Africa.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship ecosystem, market stream
4	Cherifi, Adnan; Mchikou, Tarek; Babouzet, Aissa	Growth institutions and social capital: Young firms in a post-conflict environment	2015	Empirical	Mixed method	Burkina Faso	Europe	Policy	Examines growth institutions by focusing on social capital, studying the effects of economic system characteristics, such as institutions, government role in people and local value priorities. Shows various problems in business of entrepreneurs of income towards entrepreneur activities, taking which support growth institutions, which distinguishes between the operations of local managers and entrepreneurs.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship ecosystem, social stream
5	Havens, Wim	Entrepreneurship, Post-Conflict	2009	Theoretical	Qualitative	Africa	Africa	Policy	Clarifies the importance of supporting entrepreneurs that provide productive activities, early entry, low-requirements, alternative markets. Presents 5 key dimensions to success with entrepreneur-ecosystem.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem
6	Lungu, Tudor; Haret, Roxana	Socioeconomic effects of the aftermath of war	2016	Empirical	Qualitative	Spain, Romania, Africa	Africa	Policy	Building socio-economic dimensions of war, social knowledge presents itself as a possible cause of local value creation for the societies and communities in context.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship ecosystem, social stream
7	Greenwood, Nancy; Smith, Michelle; Greenbaum, Debra; Polopinski, Peter J.	In Search of Rural Opportunities in Bosnia: The Sustainable Development of the Prokletije Country in the Case of the Ljubanica Region in Bosnia	2005	Theoretical	Qualitative	Ljubanica	Europe	Policy, Development	Focus on Rural Opportunities: assesses that comprises the social, educational, and economic policies for various policy areas for socio-economic transitions, focusing on strengths and challenges to sustain a sustainable development.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem
8	Devries, Pieter; Grootaert, Robert G.	Open to Business? An Explanation of the Impact of the Rural Environment and Country Profile on Local Entrepreneurs in Post-war and Post-war Quasi-rural Neighborhoods in Rural China	2014	Empirical	Mixed method	Netherlands	Europe	Urban studies	Studies power and political negotiations in the Netherlands, through other post-war neighborhoods that have allowed micro-business primarily to be reduced the propensity to entrepreneurial activity.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship ecosystem, local stream
9	Melina Bandemer; Ariani, Bertha; Camilla; Benoit-Cadot, Elina; Angulo, Elizabeth; Sotomayor, Maria Isabel; Mora-Jarillo, Sara	Fragmented institutions and institutional entrepreneurship: Building social capital in a changing territory	2016	Empirical	Qualitative	Colombia	South America	Management	Focus on the benefits to social entrepreneurs (those with the ability to connect) in an ecology of origin with variety of institutional from resources and knowledge sharing in helping build and economic development in post-war societies.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship ecosystem, social stream
10	Guerra-García, David; Beck, Alexander	Entrepreneurship in entrepreneurship in developing countries: Role, credit, and migration and the entrepreneurial propensity of youth and women	2020	Empirical	Qualitative	India, Latin America, Africa, Middle East	Africa, Middle East	Management	Examines impact of role, credit, and migration on entrepreneurship propensity of youth and women in specific regions and the challenges faced when implementing public policies to promote entrepreneurship among these groups.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship ecosystem, social stream
11	Pyykkonen, Jukka; Hapli, Dennis; Vuorisalo, Jari	Entrepreneurial skills among farmers: assessing a policy document	2011	Empirical	Qualitative	England, Finland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland	Europe	Policy	Focuses on farmer skills development in post-war context to help them realize their potential through institutional and social capital that farmers can connect to resources or farmer's distributed from entrepreneurship and policy documents.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship ecosystem, social stream
12	Gravel, David; Amos, Ahmad; Khatib, Zahid; Khatib, Muneer	Foreign firm operations and skills development of local entrepreneurs in industrialized countries	2011	Empirical	Qualitative	France, Great Britain, Iraq, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Spain	Africa	Management	Examines the skills and competency development of local companies in foreign firm operating in countries (colony) with the assumption that skills development can create their own and their families' economic gains that create their own economic capital and resources, prove how foreign firms can play a role in post-conflict.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship ecosystem, market stream

Number	Author	Article Title	Year	Type of Study	Methods	Country of Study	Continent	Discipline	Main study/summary	Study
13	Čatić-Kojazević, Elvira	Proposal for Institutional Relationships Among Stakeholders in the development and Support of Small and Medium Enterprises in Bosnia and Herzegovina	2013	Theoretical	Qualitative	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Europe	Policy	Proposal comparing Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH) with neighbouring countries in terms of SME development. Lack of government support, legal framework, recognition of value, are among the hindering factors. Paper presents a proposal for the structuring of relationships between institutions in BiH in order to facilitate effective support for growth and development of SMEs in BiH.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship ecosystem, ventures
14	Koik, Ans; Lestlant, François	Partnerships for Peace and Development in Fragile States: Identifying Missing Links	2015	Empirical	Qualitative	Africa	Africa	Management	Focus on understanding how partnerships with business could help promote peace and development in fragile, low-governance areas. Transformative local partnerships are generally business-nonprofit. National-level cases are incidental, and have not yet been leveraged beyond national boundaries. Despite the interconnected nature of conflict and fragility issues, few insights exist between partnerships at different levels, offering potential for development.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship ecosystem, ventures
15	de Waal, Alex	Somalia's disassembled state: clan unit formation and the political marketplace	2020	Theoretical	Qualitative	Somalia	Africa	Development	Shows how Somalia's governance has been shaped by 2 processes: first, way in which the organisation of violence drives the formation of identities and politics, in this case, most especially, clan units. Second, the penetration of market logic into components of political power, which has repeatedly dismantled efforts at order-making and the establishment of public authority.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship ecosystem, social element
16	Koik, Ans; Lestlant, François	Hybrid business models for peace and reconciliation	2016	Empirical	Qualitative	Congo	Africa	Management	Illustrates different degrees of hybridity between non-profit for profit extremes, making them pursue different combinations of social and economic goals. Key dimensions across all include frequent interactions with stakeholders, awareness of development and reconciliation issues, and personal commitment. Highlights importance for hybrid firms to balance between social and economic objectives in conflict-hit and post-conflict contexts where state is absent.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship ecosystem, ventures
17	Bodiers, Pascal; Stuyfjes, Bart	Neighbourhood Spatial Order, the Local Economy and Firm Mobility in Urban Areas of the Netherlands	2014	Empirical	Mixed-method	Netherlands	Europe	Urban studies	Contrasting pre-war and post-war neighbourhood characteristics, the local production environment shaped by the built environment and zoning regulations appear to have a small but significant effect on the firm mobility behaviour of entrepreneurs in the neighbourhoods studied. Relocation intentions are higher among entrepreneurs in post-war than in pre-war neighbourhoods, which may (in part) be attributed to less favourable local institutional settings for businesses, but actual firm mobility does not differ between these neighbourhoods.	Post-conflict entrepreneurship ecosystem, built environment



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